

IRELAND'S FIGHT! OUR FIGHT!

"SEVERAL sections of the Constitution of Oglagh na hEirean (IRA) were amended and, by more than the required two thirds majority, the delegates passed two particular resolutions. The first removed the ban on Volunteers discussing or advocating the taking of parliamentary seats. The second removed the ban on supporting successful republican candidates who take their seats in Leinster House." (Statement from General Army Convention, October 14 1986)

This resolution from the IRA's first Army Convention since the establishment of the Provisionals over sixteen years ago signalled the abandonment of the long-standing policy of abstentionism in the republican movement. In early November the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference) followed suit, adopting by over the necessary two-thirds majority the Ard Chomhairle (central committee) motion enabling Sinn Fein TDs to take their seats in the Dail.

Others that have done so, from de Valera's Fianna Fail in the twenties, through the Clann na Poblachta in the forties to Official Sinn Fein/Workers Party, have with this decision soon abandoned the armed struggle and the fight against British imperialism.

Such past history of the movement led ex-president of Sinn Fein Ruari O'Bradaigh, trying a repeat performance of the 1970 Ard Fheis, to walk out of this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis when the anti-abstentionist motion was adopted. Such a reaction can only be called impressionistic. When the republican militants walked out in '69-70 to establish the Provisionals, the Official leadership of MacGiolla had already presided over the run-down of the military campaign, with the IRA handing over its guns to the Free Wales Army and, when the revolutionary situation exploded in the Six Counties, it was unable to defend nationalist areas from Protestant/British attack.

No such equivocation is evident today within the Provisionals. The policy of the ballot box and the

Armalite still relies fundamentally on the cutting edge of the IRA. *The Guardian* commented soon after: "(The Workers Party) has transformed itself entirely from the political wing of a terrorist organisation into a pacific and non-sectarian socialist party. Sinn Fein...has no stated intention of following that route. It is as fully committed to the Armalite as to the ballot box." So far the Sinn Fein leadership of Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Danny Morrison shows no sign of following the example of MacGiolla, Goulding and Johnston.

At this year's Wolfe Tone commemoration McGuinness said: "Our attitude to the armed struggle is unambiguous."

In essence, Sinn Fein is quite correct to consider entry into the Dail as a tactic and not a principle. The danger comes in the development of illusions in this tactic. The Sinn Fein leadership has used arguments straight out of Lenin's *Left Wing Communism* to justify its turn, although not citing Lenin directly.

The Adams leadership have a reputation as men of the left, and since Adams superseded O'Bradaigh, Sinn Fein has tried to present a more proletarian, socialistic image. This is seen even more clearly within sections of the rank and file. Malcolm Rutherford, writing on the Ard Fheis in the *Financial Times* of November 7 commented: "Sinn Fein is also hard left in a way that has not proved popular with many Irish voters in the past...Several (motions) referred to the need to establish a 32 county...socialist republic. A motion condemning the Polish Solidarity movement as a 'counterrevolutionary arm of the US and its Nato allies' was withdrawn only at the last minute. So was another aligning Sinn Fein with Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Afganistan, Mongolia and Laos."

Now I am no way claiming that Sinn Fein and the IRA are some kind of workers' organisations. The reactionary position adopted by

Sinn Fein at the Ard Fheis on abortion, and the fact the above motions were withdrawn (Although the leadership has opposed those who want a strict 'third campist' position between Nato and the Warsaw Pact) make it impossible to define it as such. It is a revolutionary nationalist movement whose politics are fundamentally petit-bourgeois. But to label Sinn Fein dismissively as petit-bourgeois and to leave it there is of little practical use. Sinn Fein has a large, possibly majority, proletarian base whose interests the leadership cannot ignore and is not wholly unsympathetic to. Besides, the petit-bourgeoisie have no truly independent ideology, and are pulled hither and thither by the class forces of labour and capital on either side of them, in proportion to their respective strengths.

The growth of socialistic currents in Sinn Fein, from Arthur Griffith to Gerry Adams, is no accident. It can be seen in revolutionary nationalist movements everywhere — South Africa, China or Ireland. As capital develops the oppressed countries it creates its own gravedigger, the proletariat. The proletariat, an objectively internationalist-revolutionary class, displaces the peasantry within the liberation movements as capital destroys the basis of the peasantry — small scale private production. The liberation movement cannot but express in some form the aspirations of its growing proletarian component.

Hence in the early part of the century Arthur Griffith could unreservedly condemn workers' actions, whilst today Adams, if he does not have the leadership of such actions would at least pledge his support. However, whilst the proletariat within Sinn Fein exert an influence over the leadership, because it has no independent organisation — ie a revolutionary communist party — it must subordinate its independent interests to the interests of the movement as a whole; in the last analysis to the petit-bourgeoisie.

However, the petit-bourgeoisie has no independent politics. When

leading the liberation movement it can lead it into cul-de-sacs and betrayals, and has frequently done so. The struggle of the Irish people for liberation is full of such examples. Sinn Fein currently shows little sign of a repetition, but there can be no guarantee. A bulwark — the only bulwark — against de Valera/MacGiolla style backsliding — is independent workers' communist organisation within the liberation movement fighting for leadership in it. With such a leadership the working class in the entire Thirty-two Counties can be drawn into struggle with the liberation movement, something the new 'electoralist' tactic is directed to facilitate.

It must be stressed that we do not counterpose the communist against the revolutionary nationalist movement, we merely state that leadership by the former immeasurably strengthens the latter. In the twentieth century, the epoch of imperialism, national revolutions have either become linked to the working-class and its party — as in Cuba, Vietnam, China etc — or failed with one form of imperialist domination replacing another, as in the Twenty-six Counties.

Today, the fact that the South African Communist Party plays an ever more prominent and decisive role in the liberation struggle in South Africa can only hearten genuine revolutionaries. The fact that the Communist Party does not play a similar role in Ireland strengthens the hold of other class influences over the movement.

On the Free State and revolutionary intervention, the position of the Communist International in 1921 is as relevant as ever "the only road out of this Free State terrorism and imperialist oppression lies through an organised and coordinated struggle in the political and industrial as well as military fields. The struggle with arms alone, if not supplemented and reinforced by political and industrial action, will inevitably fail. To win success the masses must mobilise against the Free State, and this can

only be done on the basis of the social programme of the Communist Party of Ireland." (resolution from the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern). The CPI has long abandoned this revolutionary programme, but the situation today only serves to illustrate the necessity of returning to its founding principles.

It is important to note that the Comintern did not counterpose the armed to the political and industrial struggles, as did the Irish communists in their negotiations with the republicans in the late '60s; the military struggle was to be supplemented and reinforced by the industrial and political. The early CPI fought to put this into practice by organising cells within the IRA and in 1932 by convening the Republican Congress to organize the proletarian elements in the movement.

Again, we do not counterpose today's movement against the one we believe must be achieved. The Trotskyist micro-sects in Ireland prove the impotency of this method by their inability to gain any influence amongst the working class there. Communists must take a positive, constructive attitude to the republican movement, in the way that the SACP has with the ANC. Although the most militant — indeed revolutionary — sections of the working class are organised in the republican movement, it would be criminal to think Sinn Fein will go towards communism in the same way as Castro's July 26 Movement did in Cuba. To revolutionary republican workers in Ireland we must say that no blind faith can be placed in such a process; it needs a conscious expression, the Communist Party addressing itself to these tasks.

Sinn Fein stirs hatred and fear in the hearts of British imperialists. Under proletarian leadership it would become a raging terror. Today, no less than if the movement already had communist leadership, we renew our commitment to fight for Ireland's victory and Britain's defeat.

Alan Merrik



HAD ITS DAY

THE LONG BOOM of the 1950s and '60s saw profit rates soar and monopolistic competition take a relatively open form. This is no longer the case. In the frantic fight to keep up the mass of profits and stay in the race with its rivals, British capitalism is becoming more and more monopolistic, as the rash of industrial takeovers and big bang city mergers goes to show.

Yet the old British Lion cannot keep up with the likes of Japan and Federal Germany, in fact it has become less and less competitive and shows all the signs of decay. Profit rates are, according to Terence Beckett of the CBI, only "two-thirds the level we were earning in the early '60s" and "have only reached half the rate of our principal competitors abroad." The latest quarterly index of manufacturing industry for 1986 stands at only 103.5 compared with the base year of 1980. The balance of trade is consistently in the red and only invisible trade has prevented a collapse of the pound sterling.

This invisible trade reflects Britain's reliance on imperialism. (Something which is the case under all parties, because far from being a policy of this or that government, imperialism is a stage in the development of capitalism — its last). It is not only tourism and oil which have kept Britain solvent, but the massive export of capital, the ruthless exploitation of overseas workers and the frantic gambling with their fate on the stock exchange. This is what keeps Britain a 'great' power and allows the bosses to continue their bribery of sections of our class, above all the trade union and labour bureaucracy.

Yet, as countries like Japan seek to top up their own declining domestic rates of profit through super profits from abroad, Britain has gone from being second only to the US after World War II, till in 1984 it only accounted for 7.7% of total invisible trade, itself a drop of 0.8% from the previous year. Nevertheless Britain's £11.3 billion surplus on private sector receipts on invisible trade, shows, albeit imperfectly, the extent of the plunder obtained from overseas.

But crucially we must recognise that in relative terms the foreign operations are far more significant for the British capitalists than for their rivals. This was revealed in the IMF report on the British economy in 1977. It estimated Britain had net overseas assets of £85 billion, or about £40 billion less than the US, which has a GNP some seven times larger. Its overseas holdings were therefore in 1977 almost three times those of Federal Germany, ten times those of France and roughly forty times those of Italy. Given the growth of privately owned external assets from £43 billion in 1979, to £156 billion in 1984, this all goes to show that Britain is the most parasitic, the most imperialistic, of the major capitalist states.

What does this produce? In short, decay and very uneven development. We therefore see islands of rapid growth, such as computers and microtechnology, amidst a sea of decline and debt. We see the big banks, the great city institutions and the financial magnates enjoy an unprecedented mass of profits existing alongside poverty, the closures of countless workplaces and endemic mass unemployment.

Clearly capitalism has become a brake on human development which 'the next Labour government', with or without the AES, can do nothing to alter, simply because it is a servant of the system through its commitment to the capitalist state. Indeed the political superstructure of British capitalism is again beginning to ooze reaction from every pore. All establishment parties now have 'Thatcherite' policies, Kinnock even boasts he is a "reactionary", and it must be said he is. So, whoever wins the coming general election, the attacks on our livelihoods and democratic rights will continue. This is why all those who want to fight for jobs, a decent life and industrial regeneration must fight for a reformed Communist Party, so as to make revolution to end the rotten, decaying, moribund capitalist system once and for all.

The Editor

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Correspondence to: The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX

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LETTERS

Celtic people

Mick Preston's letter on nationalism, simply restates the previous 'British nation' viewpoint. In part the hub of the polemic lies with the undisclosed sense of what one means by 'workers' states', 'nationality' and what sense and perception one has of humanity and the struggle for communism.

If one has a 'social melting pot' view of the future of humanity in which all differences have been 'evolved' away; as in the words of the mid-60s song "take a bit of white man, wrap him up in black skin, mix it all together with a little bit of Red Indian" ... etc culminating in "coffee coloured people by the score". Then yes, trends and antiquarian traditions which lead away from social and ethnic fusion, or apparently lead away from it, will be opposed.

Why should small nations and peoples be allowed to be separated, if the idea is one world people, why not concentrate on fusing everyone into the biggest nations as a prelude to becoming one world nation?

If however one actually thinks national and ethnic traditions (when on an equal basis) and differences are a strength, if one believes that respect for historical origins and culture are part of a global humanitarianism developed towards communism, then one's perception of small peoples like the Scottish, the Welsh, and the Bretons and their struggle for self respect and nationality will be to see them as progressive features. Not simply in tactical terms, but in terms of how we actually relate to one another as we try to build a communist concept of the earth we live on.

If the argument is that it is easier to carry through a socialist revolution, or build class consciousness, on the basis of some evolved 'British nationality' because we do not want people divided into small states along the lines of English, Welsh, Scots ... etc, why stop there? Why should it be divided into the "small state" of Britain instead of a developed European nationality, where the 'British' become subordinate to the overall emerging nationality of the future all-European state?

I dare bet that notion sticks in the gullet. In any case, what if the Celtic people of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany decide to merge along the lines of the Celtic Entente as envisaged by John MacLean to form a more centralised and efficient unit? This would strengthen the basis for unity among the Celtic workers and nationalities and leave them to sort out their relationship with England on the same basis as any of the other European countries. That will not of course be acceptable to supporters of the greater 'British nationality' view, whatever arguments to be elaborated, the real reason will be because such a development would stop the continued subservience of the Celtic nations to the English one, and take away England's historical place as the only real nationality in the British Isles.

I refute that the problems of Scottish workers are solely due to class oppression and not also due and related to national oppression.

Scotland has the highest neonatal mortality in Europe, the worst urban deprivation, the most alcoholics etc etc. Sorry comrade, the exploitation suffered over the border, it has all the earmarks of systematic national oppression as well.

Mick Preston may well feel that it would be nice for the workers to stop talking about their historic and ethnic backgrounds and all get together instead. I myself feel that it is perfectly consistent to support the right to struggle for independence

for Celtic nations, while advocating the international brotherhood and sisterhood of the workers world wide, and their common historic goal of a communist humanity and the world for the workers.

David Douglass
Doncaster

Jack Conrad replies:

Our opposition to nationalism has little to do with a melting pot vision of the distant future (which we do indeed have) but the class struggle in the here and now. Comrade Douglass dismisses our view that there has evolved a British nation. In place of this he proposes the project of a Celtic nation. This is idealism. Our main point is, not the existence of a British nation but the need to maintain workers' unity within Britain. Communists take as their starting point the existing state.

Barnsley Centre Against

Unemployment

The users of the above Centre request that your organisation stop sending us your literature.

After a careful study of your newspaper and handouts, and taking into consideration our own experiences of individuals from your organisation during the recent Jarrow March welcome and rally in London, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. That nowhere in your literature do you indicate who finances you, leading to understandable suspicion from our users.

2. That although we give critical support to the Labour and Trade Union movement, we disagree with the tone of your criticism, which in our opinion is destructive, ultra-left and divisive.

3. That your concept for unemployed people to set up their own "mighty auxiliary army" is utopian and reflects a naive view of society and a lack of understanding of the processes at present taking place in society. Marxism is a method which has always recognised the need to work alongside, educate and transform the traditional organisations of the masses, which despite their many faults still retain, in the eyes of the vast majority of working people the mechanism to advance this cause. The creation of phantom armies by sectarian groupings such as yours only serves to confuse the less aware elements of society, leading to disillusionment, splits and apathy, which of course only serves to suit the Tories and their ilk. We advocate that in order to put pressure on our traditional organisations for radical change, it must be done through fraternal discussion, and debate.

In this respect you quite correctly call for the representation of unemployed people on Trades Councils. This policy, however, must be carried through with each centre affiliated to the TUC, and Regional Conferences covered on a bi-monthly basis (as in Yorkshire and Humberside). Incidentally our Centre has two representatives on the local Trades Council with full voting rights. This policy, whilst not of course perfect or near as revolutionary as we might want, is at least realistic, and the process of

achieving this raises the issues of the nature of the TUC, Labour Party and the system which creates mass unemployment. Yorkshire and Humberside TUC Centres have achieved some important reforms through this policy, including concessionary travel on buses and trains for the unemployed, YTS monitoring teams in certain areas, a commitment and a TU studies centre in Barnsley, Courses at Northern College and a bulletin written and organised by unemployed and the TUC, with the EB being in our control.

No doubt such an ultra-left, sectarian group such as yours will scoff at our seeming reliance on the Labour and Trades Union movement and its leaders. We are as much aware of the failures of past and present representatives of working people and are under no illusions about the nature of British capitalism, but to be blunt, if it is a choice of your way or ours, then it decidedly has to be ours.

Yours fraternally,
Anne Sykes
Secretary
Users Committee
Barnsley

Brighton scroungers

The Unemployment Centre in Brighton is a front — a con. Why? When it was opened in a blaze of Hollywood bally hoo publicity with £10,000 of ratepayers money, it was the cheapest meal in town — 50p. Then all the dossers segregated to dossers day centre (all unemployed) were booted out as beneath the socialistic Trot order of the Unemployed Centre — so they departed under police escort (never to return to the fold) — as undesirable boozers.

We have 17,000 on the dole in Brighton, only a few used to turn up at the Trois Unemployed Centre. Now they have stopped coming. Result — building empty by day — but hold it. There are political activists, Trots, running all the various offices etc in this large building (it used to be dance hall) so it is used for all left (mainly Trot) political meetings, plus WEA courses at night.

As for the unemployed — you need field glasses to spot one.

Okay — so next to your fine paper *The Leninist* plus your lit. I asked for some, it had been disposed of. Why? The remarks I received from Trot commanding officers of the building was these UWC wallers are jumping on the unemployed bandwagon trying to gain a piece of 'the action'. Result — your lit not welcome.

So in effect the Unemployed Centre is a joke. Used for political meetings for mostly Militant, SWP, *Morning Star*, NCP types, at the expense of the unemployed of Brighton and Hove.

Now I'm not against the building being used for political purposes. What I am against is the way it has been turned round to suit the organisers as a cheap office with little or no regard to the original purpose.

Ron Smith
Brighton

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.



PHONE
01-431 3135

WRITE TO:
The Editor
BCM Box 928
LONDON
WC1N 3XX

STALIN'S SHADOW



VYACHESLAV SRIABIN (MOLOTOV), who died last month aged 96, came from a well-off family of intellectuals. The 1905 Revolution saw him break with his class and liberalism, and he joined the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (now the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in 1906. He sided with the Bolshevik wing of the Party, became a professional revolutionary and adopted the name Molotov.

Although no theoretician or orator, he quickly proved himself a 'committee man' of the first order. Critics, not least Trotsky, tended to play on his greyness, his dullness and lack of humour. Nonetheless he was a patient and truly brilliant administrator who, although often contradictorily, defended the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union to the full.

Despite his youth he played a leading role in the Bolshevik Party in the February 1917 Revolution. As one of three members of the Party's temporary bureau he edited Pravda (which he had helped Stalin set up in 1913). Under his editorship the paper called for the overthrow of the government of Prince Lvov and the transfer of power to the Soviets.

The return from exile of Stalin and Kamenev, not only saw Molotov assigned to other work, but his revolutionary political line toned down, as Stalin and Kamenev toyed with the idea of Bolshevik/Menshevik reunification. With Lenin's arrival on the scene and the publication of the April Thesis, Molotov sided with him and the call for a new revolution.

After October 1917 he held a wide variety of posts of the highest responsibility, including secretary to the Central Committee. It was in this capacity that Lenin wrote to him in March 1922 pointing to the dangers to the Soviet regime if there was a split in the leadership.

"If one does not wish to close one's eyes to reality," Lenin warned, "one ought to admit that at present the proletarian character of the party's policy is determined not by the class composition of the membership but by the enormous and undivided authority of that very thin stratum who might be described as the party's old guard." Lenin insisted that: "Even the slightest dissension in this stratum may be enough to weaken its authority to an extent that it could forfeit its power of decision".

As is well known, dissension there was. Throughout the subsequent 15 years or so, the Party was wracked by a whole series of clashes amongst the old guard.

Even before the death of Lenin, Molotov lined himself up with the centrist tendency headed by JV



Molotov: Stalin's faithful lieutenant

Stalin. Like Stalin, he was one of the quickest in making the transition from professional revolutionary to bureaucratic functionary. He became Stalin's closest aid, and with some justification, many have said his sycophant and shadow.

In the 1920s as Stalin's right hand man he fought a no-holds barred battle, within the old guard, first with Trotsky, then with Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, and finally with Bukharin. As well as wanting to advance his own standing, Molotov obviously trusted Stalin's 'moderation', and thought by lining up with him he was doing his duty to the Soviet Party and state.

The entire logic of historical development forced the bureaucratic centrists to abandon their 'moderation'. After the defeat of all serious opposition from the old guard, and after denouncing left oppositionists as super-industrialisers, Stalin 'stole' their programme of primitive socialist accumulation and launched the first five year plan.

Stalin carried out this 'second revolution' using the most idealist and therefore bureaucratic and costly methods. At Stalin's prompting, Molotov joined with him in dizzily piling one target on another with reckless abandon.

The five year 'plan' became a orgy of destruction in the countryside as the naturally individualistic peasants resisted the forced collectivisation of their property. In the towns workers saw their rights swept aside as Stalin and Molotov called for the storming of targets.

Yet, despite the disregard for rationality and the scientific approach, this was a genuine great leap forward (despite vast exaggeration at the time) as it collectivised and industrialised the country; a profoundly progressive and truly historical achievement.

The centrists produced no such results in the Communist International. Molotov became Stalin's chief exponent of the so-called 'Third Period' theory. Amongst other erroneous conclusions this

theory branded social democracy as the twin of fascism, indeed painted social democracy as being more dangerous than fascism. Such a line, in practice, could only but lead to the extreme isolation of the communist vanguard from social democratic workers and in Germany this facilitated Hitler's rise to power.

Molotov went along with Stalin's centrist distortion of Marxism-Leninism. The first edition of Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism* saw him mock the idea of full socialism being built in the USSR if it remained isolated. Yet in the second edition he crudely twisted quotes of Lenin to justify the isolation of socialism in the USSR as being no basic problem, in order to split the tasks of socialist construction in the USSR from the world revolution.

In the mid-1930s the formal socialism which resulted from the backwardness of the Soviet Union, its existence in a sea of counterrevolutionary hostility, was proclaimed as the triumph of communism. Yet this 'triumph of communism' went hand in hand with a whole series of retreats which were never admitted as being retreats.

The abandonment of early advanced measures on such questions as the family and abortion, democratic rights and toleration of differences, the goal of equality and the principle of Party members receiving only the average workers' wage, were dropped as contrary to Marxism-Leninism.

Using this method all real or imagined opposition to Stalin's leadership was branded by his lieutenants, like Molotov, as an act of treachery to the Soviet state. Large numbers of loyal Party members were falsely accused of being enemy agents.

Expulsion from the Party, exile in Siberia and eventually execution, became the fate of many of Lenin's old guard. In fact, in the hands of Stalin and his allies, like Molotov, the use of terror became one of the main instruments of keeping control of both the Party and state. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, perished in the years before World War II.

In May 1939, because of the growing threat from Nazi Germany, Molotov was moved from the post of Prime Minister to Minister of Foreign Affairs. In this capacity he was responsible for negotiating the Soviet-German non-aggression pact which was signed in August of that year.

This has been portrayed as giving the Soviet Union breathing space before the inevitable German attack. True or false, there can be no question about the Red Army's lack of preparedness when Hitler launched operation Barbarossa. In the face of the German invasion Molotov became Deputy Chairman of the State Defence Committee and threw his considerable talents into the task of ripping the guts out of the Nazi war machine.

Despite always being threatened by Stalin's terror, despite the fact that his wife was exiled; because of his close association with the crimes by the Party under Stalin, Molotov was almost bound to suffer after Khrushchev's 20th Congress revelations. In Stalin's days he would have been shot, but by 1957 there was a more tolerant attitude. He was dropped from the leadership of the CPSU and in 1962 he was actually expelled. After many years living quietly in private life he was readmitted into the Party in 1984.

The November meeting of the Party's Executive Committee, rightly in our view, voted to urge the Soviet authorities to rehabilitate "old Bolsheviks like Zinoviev and Kamenev" and other leading Soviet communists who were "unjustly" found guilty at the 1936 Moscow Trials. This will no doubt come as a shock to the Stalin admiration society behind the publication *Straight Left*. In the letters page of 7 Days a couple of months ago *Straight Leftist* comrade Sylvia Bolgar, amongst others, let the 'broad labour movement' mask slip. "We may not be 100% sure of all the facts" about the trials, said Bolgar, moronically telling us the obvious. To her, and her factional friends, one evidently has to be proven 100% innocent in order not to be shot. This presumption of guilt means the *Straight Leftists*, like Sylvia Bolgar, can denounce any discussion of Stalin's judicial massacre of Lenin's old comrades as a "diversion". For Leninists, revolutionary justice demands the truth, and since the basis of the so-called evidence which was used to convict communists like Zinoviev, Rykov and Bukharin was demolished at the 20th and 22nd congresses, the clearing of their names is long overdue. Surely our Soviet comrades should now open up all the records relating to the trials and republish the writings of these and other communists (including Stalin and Trotsky) which have for so long been kept on the restricted circulation list.

Resolutions supporting the *Morning Star* have been ruled out of order at district congresses controlled by supporters of *Marxism Today*. This device is used on the pretext that to do so would be a violation of national congress policy. This curbing of democratic rights is a classic example of the bureaucratic centralism practised by the Eurocommunists. Yet the East Midlands and West Middlesex congresses overwhelmingly carried resolutions backing the paper. This was against calls from Executive Committee members like comrades John Peck and Ian McKay. We, of course, fully support the right of district congresses to consider resolutions on any subject.

The South East Midlands district of the CPGB is in a mess. The treasurer has disappeared, few are willing to serve on the leadership, the Chaterites control a number of branches, not least Watford, and there is a growing antagonism between the stuffy right opportunist old guard and the Euro feminists. Delegates to the district congress were presented with a main resolution under the title *Mobilise to defeat Tory Councils and MPs*. According to it SE Mids was "dominated by a fascist orientated Tory squirearchy" until "it became an area of hope with modern industrial development." Not surprisingly the 34 congress delegates chucked out this arrant nonsense and gave those most identified with it derisory votes: Tom Mitchell the district chairman — 18, Muriel Green the district secretary — 25 and EC member Ron Halverson 24.

SPLENDID, BUT NOT ENOUGH

More readers are responding to our call for a regular standing order to help finance *The Leninist*. A South London reader has pledged £5 a month, an NUT member from Yorkshire says we deserve his £4 monthly standing order in recognition of our "stand against Doug McEvoy's determination to sell teachers conditions" and another Yorkshire reader has decided to give "your excellent paper £20 a month" to "celebrate five years fighting for Leninism against centrism, revisionism and opportunism".

This is splendid, but three new standing orders since our last edition is not enough to take our plans for 1987 off the drawing board. Just fill in the form below and send it to your bank, but let us know how much you are going to pay into our account. Our £600 monthly fighting fund went over the top in November, not least because of our 5th Anniversary rally, with a total of £692 being raised. Can we do better in December? Flood us with Christmas presents to help make 1987 a revolutionary new year.

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Colonialism of a special type, stages in the revolution, the leading role of the working class and its communist party — these are vital questions of the South African revolution. What should be the attitude of revolutionaries in Britain?

FIGHT RACISM FIGHT OPPORTUNISM

ON July 30 1986 Comrade Joe Slovo, chairman of the South African Communist Party (SACP), gave a speech at a rally held in Conway Hall in London to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the founding of the party. In the September 1986 issue of *Fight Racism, Fight Imperialism*, the paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), leading member of the RCG David Reed presented a critique of that speech.

As our own comrade Alan Merrik pointed out in *The Leninist*, this marked a sharp departure from the usual practice of the RCG, which had up until then refrained from polemic with revolutionaries from other countries on the dubious grounds that it would be racist if they did.

Not surprisingly, then, Reed came under attack from within his own ranks in the following issue of *FRFI*. There, Reed defended himself by arguing, quite correctly, that a revolutionary Communist International can only be reformed through open ideological struggle, including between communists of different countries, adding furthermore that the RCG has a right to be part of these ideological struggles.

The Leninist has from its inception upheld the necessity of internationalist criticism between communists; but we have also been forced to make direct criticism of the RCG for not even recognising the existence of, let alone the need to reforge the world communist movement. Rather than dwell on past little England positions that Reed at least no longer wishes to adhere to in public, *The Leninist* welcomes his new turn. A serious revolutionary in Britain cannot afford to sit idly by while revolutionaries in other countries are carrying out betrayals or even making mistakes.

However, a communist who claims to be exercising the internationalist duty of comradely criticism of the SACP has an obligation to deal systematically with the role of that Party, with the evolution of its ideas, and with the nature of that Party's propaganda amongst the masses. That means systematically dealing with the Party's programme, *The Road to South African Freedom*, adopted in 1962 and its practice since then. It means also looking at the nature of the Party's underground literature, such as *Umsebenzi*, distributed on the ground in South Africa since 1985.

But what can we make of a communist who chooses to do none of these things, but instead opportunistically opts to review a single speech given in London to an audience far removed from the struggle itself, at an essentially diplomatic event in the tradition of the mainstream of the world communist movement? Is such a speech really so important that someone who fancies himself a leading communist in Britain should feel it to be his internationalist duty to criticise it after ignoring the SACP for so long?

For Reed's article is not the latest in a long line of polemics with the SACP. On the contrary, neither Reed nor the RCG has seen fit in the past to review the SACP's programme, nor review a single issue of *Umsebenzi* or *African Communist*. Detailed articles on the role of the SACP in the South African revolution have up till now been conspicuous by their absence from *FRFI*. This article by Reed is to be understood as the RCG's definitive statement on the SACP and the South African revolution, or else it simply does not make sense. That Reed should present a critique of the SACP on the basis of such a speech alone raises questions as to his real intentions.

But what of the substance of the criticisms Reed makes? On the basis of Slovo's speech, Reed presents a damning critique of the SACP. I will deal with the points that Reed raises under three headings: colonialism of a special type; the relationship between the national and the socialist 'stages' of the revolution; and the vanguard role of the party and the role of the working class in the revolution.

It is my contention that to the extent that the SACP has different positions to Reed, the positions that Reed outlines in opposition to the SACP are fundamentally incorrect in each case. That is not to say that there are not ambiguities in the SACP's positions. *The Leninist* has pointed out elsewhere (in our supplements on South Africa) the areas where we believed that the SACP was unclear, particularly on the question of stages in the revolution. What I am saying is that on these strategic questions Reed



at best fails in his attempt at clarification; at worst, he is plainly wrong.

Colonialism of a Special Type

As is well known, the SACP, along with the ANC and many other political formations within South Africa, adheres to the theory that South Africa is a case of colonialism of a special type. In the words of the SACP programme,

"South Africa is not a colony but an independent state. Yet masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain, in 1910, was not a victory over the forces of imperialism. It was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred not into the hands of the masses of people in South Africa, but into the hands of the white minority alone. The evils of colonialism, insofar as the non-white majority was concerned, were perpetuated and reinforced. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing White nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed people themselves and lived side by side with them. [...] On one level, that of 'White South Africa', there are all the features of an advanced capitalist state in its final stage of imperialism. [...] But on another level, that of 'Non-White South Africa', there are all the features of a colony. [...] It is this combination... which determines the special nature of the South African system." (*The Road to South African Freedom*, in *South African Communists Speak*, pp299-300).

The theory of colonialism of a special type, then, is an attempt to explain the nature of the transition in 1910. There was a transfer of political power, but from the imperial power to the local colonialists. The essential political relationships, from the perspective of the black population in South Africa, were left untouched by the transfer. It is because of this that the present struggle is a struggle for national liberation. That is the essence of the theory and what it seeks to explain. Any attempt to replace the theory must provide an adequate answer to the question of what exactly was the nature of the 1910 transfer.

Reed claims that an assessment of South Africa as a special type of colonialism "cannot be sustained in a Marxist understanding of capitalism and imperialism", but chooses not to explain why, preferring instead to refer the reader to an article by Michael Williams in the 1975 Bulletin of the *Conference of Socialist Economists*, a duplicated journal to be found only in well stocked academic libraries. People reading Reed's article in *FRFI* will in general not be in a position to nip off and flick through a copy of William's piece. Reed knows this, and yet he chose not to attempt to summarise the main points of the argument. What has David Reed got to hide on this point?

If you do take the trouble to unearth



indissoluble connection, they are facets of one revolution and not two revolutions".

Quite, but that hardly exhausts the question. In fact, it does not even touch on the essence of the matter. As Reed notes elsewhere in the article, the question of power is the "fundamental problem of all revolutions." But Reed prefers not to explain the real meaning of this. The connection between the different stages of the revolution stems from the nature of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism. In the epoch of imperialism, to fully carry out the tasks of the national democratic revolution the proletariat must establish its own dictatorship. Under bourgeois rule, even these tasks cannot be fully carried out. Put another way, to carry out the tasks of the national democratic revolution requires the expropriation of the bourgeoisie politically.

Let us be concrete. This means that the national liberation struggle, if carried out to the full, must not stop at a change of government. If we look at the writings of the African National Congress (ANC), let alone the SACP, we see that they are clear on this question. In the booklet, *Selected Writings on the Freedom Charter*, you will find this spelled out in the plainest form imaginable. For example, in *Revolutionary Programme of the African National Congress*, an analysis of the *Freedom Charter* (1957) adopted by the ANC at the Morogoro Conference in 1969, you will read that the Charter "requires to be achieved and put into practice. This cannot be done until state power has been seized from the fascist South African government and transferred to the revolutionary forces led by the ANC"; that "the present administration will be smashed and broken up"; that the "present police force and army are instruments of coercion to protect White supremacy ... It is the major aim of the armed revolution to defeat and destroy the police force, army and other instruments of coercion of the present state."

There are two aspects to this. Firstly, it is only through working class power that the present state will be smashed. But unless this power becomes hegemonic leadership there could be a reformist settlement, that is one which involves the transfer of governmental power rather than of state power. Secondly, under working class leadership, the form of the new state must be the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the balance of class forces is favourable, then the victory of the national democratic revolution will lay the basis for an uninterrupted transition to socialism.

The following quote from *Umsebenzi*, issue 3, 1986 shows clearly what form of settlement the SACP says it is fighting for, and what form of state it says it will try to build:

"In issue No.1 of this year *Umsebenzi* hailed 1986 as a year of decision; a year filled with promise for a major advance along the road leading to People's Power. The first six months which have passed have seen further giant steps along that road. In growing numbers our masses have followed the signposts illuminated by the ANC-led liberation alliance.

"Let us consolidate our gains and advance.

"Popular grass-roots organisation — the second stage of ungovernability — has taken root in most of the black ghettos. The committees, which are multiplying at the level of the community and the street, are the seeds of future organs of People's Power.

"Now, they must be spread to every corner of our land as grass-roots instruments of popular resistance and mobilisation."

The state the SACP wants to establish will be based on organs of what it calls peoples power, which are to develop, and indeed are developing, out of the street committees. The SACP is calling on its militants and those it influences to step up and push forward the creation of these committees. But what are these committees in the concrete? They are embryonic working class organs of dual power, and this is the case whether the SACP or anyone else for that matter calls them People's Power, "true democracy" or whatever. We must not lose sight of this when criticising the SACP, as *The Leninist* has done, for not openly acknowledging that this is in fact the case. A state formed on these committees would constitute the dictatorship of the proletariat.

If it is People's Power in this sense that Slovo is referring to in the phrase "within a truly democratic framework" then it is entirely

possible that the drive towards socialism "could well be settled in debate rather than on the streets." To say this much is to do no more than to recognise that with the formation of such a state, the revolution can move uninterruptedly from the national democratic 'stage' to the socialist 'stage'. No further revolution would be necessary.

So, when Reed objects strongly to this, and claims that Slovo is "laying before us the prospect of a peaceful road to socialism", we can only conclude that he is being either thoroughly dishonest or thoroughly stupid. It is a funny "peaceful road to socialism" which follows the strategy of armed struggle and the formation of organs of dual power — I only wish the Communist Party of Great Britain was committed to such a "peaceful road".

The essence of the question lies here. The debate on the question of two-stages or uninterrupted revolution centres on which class will come to power through the national democratic revolution, and not at all on the question of what measures will be taken immediately after the national democratic tasks have been fulfilled. That, in the concrete, is the relationship between the national democratic and the socialist 'stages' of the revolution.

Comrade Slovo is at pains to point out that the *Freedom Charter* is not a blueprint for socialism. It is not. Slovo adds that:

"For some while after apartheid falls there will undoubtedly be a mixed economy, implying a role for levels of non-monopoly private enterprise represented not only by the small racially oppressed black business sector but also by managers and business people of goodwill who have or are prepared to shed racism."

Reed objects to the term "mixed economy" on the grounds that it is unscientific, and that "Britain is said by many to have a 'mixed economy'." Britain is also said by many to be democratic; on Reed's terms the SACP should cease to talk about "democracy" too. And as to being unscientific, what utter nonsense. The term has a very precise meaning: that the economy includes both state-owned and privately owned units. Britain does have a "mixed economy", but under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The SACP is fighting for a South Africa which will, in the period immediately following the revolution, also have a mixed economy, but under the dictatorship of the proletariat. And they are correct to do so.

Did the Chinese Communist Party proceed immediately towards the expropriation of every capitalist enterprise? Or course not. But did this mean that they failed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat? Again, of course not. The same can equally be said of the Vietnamese revolution, and of the Russian, and so on. Pol Pot, as we know, was somewhat more impatient.

Reed, however, seems to want Slovo to state explicitly that, when in power, they will move immediately, without hesitation, towards the expropriation of capital. "There is one way only to deal with Anglo-American and that is to nationalise it — transfer it to the 'ownership of the people'," he writes. This is true in the final analysis, but politics is rather more complicated than this "in the final analysis" business. To hesitate on even that question is not to sell out the revolution; to repeat, to expropriate this or that capital, later rather than sooner, is a tactical question.

The Role of the Vanguard Party and the Role of the Working Class in the Revolution

To summarise the above argument in one sentence: the role of the Communist Party in the national democratic revolution is not to concentrate on this or that precise measure to be carried out once the apartheid state is smashed, but to ensure that the state is smashed, and to ensure that the working class plays the leading role in the liberation alliance.

Once the problem is posed in this way, it is clear that the SACP has been playing, and continues to play, precisely this vanguard role. When Reed argues that communists should not "fail to assert the primacy of the working class until the victory of the national democratic revolution", I really could not agree more. But has the SACP failed to carry out its vanguard role? For the SACP has not only played a

leading role in the liberation alliance.

Communists such as Joe Slovo, Govan Mbeki, David Kitson and the late Moses Mabhida have played leading roles, and have been amongst the elected leadership of the ANC, including and even especially in its armed wing, Umkhonto. The Party has fought for, and won, recognition within the ANC of the leading role that the working class must play in the struggle for national liberation; of the place of the struggle for liberation in South Africa in the worldwide struggle against imperialism and exploitation; of the necessity to move beyond formal political emancipation on to social emancipation. In doing this, it has had to fight against currents which eventually either split from the ANC or were expelled; two such currents were those who went on to form the Pan Africanist Congress, and the "Gang of 8".

It is by what a Party does, and not solely by what a Party says, that it should be judged. And that is recognised in South Africa, even if it is not recognised in the leadership of the RCG. The ANC knows that victory depends on the alliance with the SACP on the ground, as was proven by Nelson Mandela's honourable refusal to denounce communism from the dock at his trial, and again by Oliver Tambo's repeated refusal to denounce the liberation alliance of the ANC and the SACP.

It is shown, too, by Botha in his efforts to break that alliance, to wrest a "moderate nationalist" wing from the ANC. And it is shown in the shouts of "viva Communism" and "viva the spirit of Karl Marx" that are made by youth at funerals in the townships. Shown too in the unfurling of the SACP banner at those same funerals and in the relaunching of the underground SACP paper, *Umsebenzi*. It is there to be seen, yet David Reed cannot see it.

Conclusion

To conclude, the charges I make against David Reed are follows. Firstly, he has chosen to attack the SACP through a critique of a single speech in isolation from the Party's actions and propaganda amongst South African masses. This is no way to conduct internationalist polemics.

Secondly, on a central question of the revolution, namely the characterisation by the SACP and the ANC of South Africa as colonialism of a special type, Reed refuses to confront the theory openly, preferring to refer the reader to an obscure article which in any case fails to prove the point in question. The method Reed employs on these two points is more suited to someone who has an axe to grind about comrade Slovo as an individual than to open debate between communists of different countries. Is Reed more concerned about the City of London AA Group than the South African revolution? It could be, and if it is so, this is crass opportunism of the worst sort. With this sort of approach it is impossible to fight imperialism — indeed it plays into the hands of imperialism.

Thirdly, on those points which Reed condescends to put his arguments down on paper, he not only fails to make an advance on the SACP's positions or even those expressed by Slovo in the speech in question, but rather Reed shows himself to be confused and demagogic.

Finally, there is one point on which Reed and I are in complete agreement. The occasion of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the SACP, or the Communist Party of South Africa as it was then called, could have provided an excellent occasion for the SACP to have exposed the failure of the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain to fulfil their internationalist duties to those fighting for liberation from British imperialism and its allies, be it in South Africa or in Ireland. And what an opportunity to expose the cowardly role of those at the head of the Communist Party of Ireland, which brands those who are fighting against the British state as terrorists.

But this criticism, coming as it does from David Reed, the leader of the RCG which in the past elevated non-criticism of liberation movements to a principle, refused to recognise the role, or even the existence, of communist parties in such countries as South Africa and has totally retreated from all serious polemic is hypocritical. What concerns Reed is his inflated ego and little England political project.

Richard Parker

Williams' article, you will see Reed's problem. Williams sets out to criticise the work of South African former-prisoner Harold Wolpe, an adherent of the theory of colonialism of a special type. Wolpe's argument is briefly as follows: the theory of colonialism of a special type, which refers to a political and therefore superstructural relation, must itself be based on specific economic relations, that is relations of production.

Wolpe tries to show that this is the relationship between the capitalist mode of production and what he argues are precapitalist modes of production of the homelands. Williams accepts Wolpe's premiss, that the theory of colonialism of a special type must be based on the articulation of modes of production, and goes on to show, quite brilliantly, that there is no such "articulation" of different modes of production in South Africa, and therefore that a theory which bases itself on such an articulation "cannot be sustained in a Marxist understanding of capitalism and imperialism".

But he at no time proves that the theory does in fact rest on such an articulation, and so, far from disproving the theory of colonialism of a special type, Williams fails even to address himself to the question of the nature of the political transition in 1910. Again, Reed must know this.

But there is another point here. It is the nature of South African society as a special form of colonialism that gives the present revolution its nature of being a national democratic revolution. The black masses of South Africa are fighting a struggle for national liberation from their colonial oppression. Reed appears to agree when he says that "you cannot go on to socialism except by the revolutionary democratic path — through the national democratic revolution". But he does not explain why this should be the case for the South African revolution if there is no colonial element to South African society. What is it about South Africa which makes the struggle one for national liberation, David?

The Relationship Between the National and Socialist Stages of the Revolution

Although Reed would appear to be unclear as to why the present struggle is for national liberation, he seems to think that he understands clearly the relationship between this struggle and the struggle for socialism. According to Reed:

"you cannot go on to socialism except by the revolutionary democratic path — through the national democratic revolution. But neither can the national democratic revolution be completed nor its gains defended without going on to socialism. Between the two stages there is an

&

■ The 'hard line' General Secretary of Liberation, Tony Gilbert, wrote to the Morning Star that it was "disturbing" to read in the paper that "the next Labour government will stand four square behind US imperialism". That this statement of fact disturbed comrade Gilbert says everything about comrade Gilbert. As the Morning Star quite rightly pointed out Kinnock has made the Labour Party's pro-imperialist position crystal clear for all those not determined to fool themselves. But comrade Gilbert feels he must "welcome what is positive" ie fool himself about Kinnock and the Labour Party and "not exaggerate the negative" ie fool himself.

■ It is said one falsehood tells a thousand truths. Well at the last Anti-Apartheid Movement Executive comrade Brian Filling, a leading supporter of Straight Leftism, was desperately trying to justify his joining with a call to scab on the boycott of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games. The Scottish TUC was concerned that the Nigerian and Ghanaian initiated boycott would damage Scotland. So it approached just about every respectable organisation across the political spectrum in Scotland (not the Communist Party) to issue a joint appeal against the boycott. Acting as Scottish AAM secretary Brian says he decided to work with the bureaucrats appeal to save the Games, not because he agreed with it, but because he hoped to influence the Scottish TUC to support... you guessed it: a boycott.

■ So before the two white South African athletes due to compete as part of the English team were dropped comrade Filling put his name to a document which incredibly argued for all Commonwealth countries to attend as a "political gesture of solidarity against Mrs Thatcher's position". Now he says he disagrees with this. But others in the same Straight Leftist faction are telling a different story — a great fault amongst scabs. Comrade Filling's Scottish AAM vice-chair, comrade John McKinnon, insisted the Scottish TUC sanctions busting was OK because "Scotland did not elect Thatcher and the people of Scotland were against apartheid". Surely the comrades in Scotland's Straight Leftist faction should decide to tell the same story.

AIDS

The state is stepping up its scare-mongering campaign about the 'gay plague' AIDS. Communists must take sides with the oppressed.



The AIDS virus



THE GAY PLAGUE PANIC

WHEN was the last time you had sex with a Haitian? Can you guarantee that your current sexual partner has always kept to the heterosexual straight and narrow? Or that they have never used a shared intravenous needle to take drugs? The Leninist doesn't want to know, so don't write in. These questions, however, are currently being put to blood donors up and down the country. The official 'reason' that is given for these inquiries is the fact that the deadly AIDS virus can be passed through donated plasma. In fact, it is an expression of the increasingly shrill hysterics that crisis wracked bourgeois society in Britain is having about foreigners, gays and anyone who deviates from the projected 'norm'.

But surely there are dangers with AIDS virus carriers giving blood? After all, blood is one of the main active agents in transmitting this disease. The real problems posed by the issue can be seen if we look at one group in society who should theoretically be most susceptible to AIDS infection through contaminated blood — haemophiliacs.

Clots

Haemophiliacs are people with an inherited defect in their blood clotting mechanism; one or two of the clotting factors essential for clot formation are either limited or totally absent. Even a minor wound can thus cause a haemophiliac to bleed to death and so in order to survive, they must receive regular injections of the missing clot factors, most commonly factor VIII. Several thousand blood donors are required to manufacture the factor VIII and IX concentrates in the required quantities and so a severe haemophiliac can be indirectly exposed to tens of thousands of donors a year.

Haemophiliacs are consequently far more at risk from contamination with the virus than other receivers of blood, where relatively much fewer donors are used. Yet even in this 'high risk' group the figures are far from being of 'epidemic' proportions: in the USA 0.8% of haemophiliacs have AIDS virus and the figure in Britain is even lower at 0.2%. Rather than fuelling public



hysteria about the 'gay plague', why doesn't the government-run Blood Transfusion Service ensure that all blood donated is adequately screened for AIDS virus before use?

In a word, money. The Manchester Evening News of November 17 reported that "tests introduced on October 14 last year ensure that all blood is now screened for AIDS anti-bodies and that all donor organs are similarly tested before a transplant."

The problem is that the antibody test is not necessarily foolproof. Sometimes, even if the results of the test have proved positive, definite diagnosis requires a further test — the colourfully named 'Western Blot', which is slow, difficult ... and costly.

More seriously, the antibody test is in essence a test for the signs that a body's natural defences have started to fight the AIDS virus that is or has been in the system. However, it does not predict whether the individual is still infectious or whether the AIDS virus is still present. Also it can take

up to three months for the body to start to produce antibodies against the AIDS virus! And during this period of infection the person will be infectious to others.

So why not directly test for AIDS virus in donated blood, rather than its antibody 'shadow'? Because in order to do that, you have to manufacture your own antibodies rather than look for them in the patient; the only way you do that is by taking them from live animals and that is extremely expensive.

The amount of state money that has been allocated to research and cure AIDS — some £20 million — is a sick joke which reveals that the government's real concern is not to fight sexual disease. Cervical cancer for example, is a disease that claims the lives of over two thousand women every year, or put another way, ten times the number that AIDS has killed.

So the bourgeoisie's dirty and lying hypocrisy when it talks about the AIDS "epidemic" is a little hard to stomach. So far, there have been

just 20,000 cases of AIDS worldwide, 10,000 of whom have died. At the same time, women continue to drop in their thousands every year from treatable and curable cancer, which the government refuses to eradicate by providing adequate funds.

Also the AIDS 'epidemic' does not compare so far with real plagues, like the 1919 Spanish flu outbreak, which finished off half a million Americans and 20 million globally all told, by the time it was through with humanity. That august body, the World Health Organisation, estimated that over one million died from malaria in 1983 and that there were 50 million new reported cases of syphilis. Put in those terms, the 'gay plague' of AIDS which so far has put away just 10,000, doesn't seem to be such a huge natural disaster as it has been painted. The reason for its high profile lies elsewhere, in rather more base political reasons.

Insulting

In fact, the bulk of this insulting £20 million provided by central government has been spent on a public 'information' campaign. The quality of the 'information' provided by the establishment is, however, pretty dubious and designed in fact to promote a mood of fear that can be used to justify more repressive legislation in society in general.

Thus, one of the recommendations to homosexuals for 'safe sex' in a recent handbook was "No sex with people from high risk areas (America, Africa, Haiti)". The hysteria that surrounds the 'unclean sex' of homosexual love is spilling over into injunctions against mixed race heterosexual sex. After all, the ratio of men to women in Africa with AIDS is one to one! And recent evidence shows that in fact the main method of transmission among Africans may be heterosexual contact — so surely the implication is that cross-race sex is dangerous as blacks are more likely to be infected than whites?

Sub-Saharan Africa

The working people of Sub-Saharan Africa are indeed tortured and oppressed by sexual disease; fifty per cent of women are infertile and 80% of that figure is due to sexually transmitted disease; between 5 and 8% of all children who survive their third month later die from syphilis, and cervical cancer is the commonest malignant disease. Yet communists do not pass this off as the wages of sin that the Africans must pay for their 'promiscuous' ways. The fault lies with imperialism, in particular with our own imperialism, that has systematically looted and underdeveloped the 'Third World' in the past, and that today holds these countries down and ensures their dire poverty and low cultural level persists. Imperialism is the real syphilis of this world.

Communists are the most intransigent fighters against the sexual misery of humanity. We defend gays against the dark reaction that is threatening to engulf them. We demand that the bourgeois governments of the world provide sufficient funds to cure terrible diseases like AIDS and not to fan the flames of public panic. We stand shoulder to shoulder with gays and all the oppressed, and consider it our duty as revolutionaries to fight for the working class as a whole to do the same. When the proletariat start to do that, we'll be on our way to a world that will banish the horror and misery of sexual disease, of hunger and of all forms of oppression forever.

Ian Mahoney

REVIEWS



Debt dilemma

Peter Korner, Gero Maass, Thomas Siebold and Rainer Tetzlaff, *The IMF and the Debt Crisis: A Guide to the Third World's Dilemmas*, Zed Press 1986, Price £6.95.

THE TROUBLE with a great many books on this subject is that they approach the problem from a perspective of 'North' versus 'South', and that they interpret their task as one of castigating the governments of the 'North' for exploiting the 'South' and for following policies which have led to the debt crisis. It is to the credit of the authors of this book that they have attempted to go beyond the simplicities of liberalism, and that they have at least posed some more penetrating questions.

A further strength of the book is its historical perspective, which tries to compare and contrast the present debt crisis with the problems faced by developing countries in past periods, for example the indebtedness of Egypt in the 19th century which culminated in its being colonised, and the problems faced by the former colonies in Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s.

The former example warns us ominously of the methods which imperialism will use to settle its problems; first intervention in the policies of an independent state, finally military intervention. The example of Latin America in the 20th century highlights the problems of the default 'option'. Default would mean cutting lines to sources of credit, and as such is an impossibility for the trade-dependent bourgeoisie of the so-called 'Third World'.

The book has a valuable chapter on the origins, structure and role of the International Monetary Fund. Created in the aftermath of the second world war as the crisis manager of the international monetary system, the IMF was shaped in the interests of US imperialism. The finer details of its structure and modes of functioning were thrashed out at Bretton Woods between rising US imperialism and declining British imperialism, represented by the intellectual father of the Alternative Economic Strategy, John Maynard Keynes.

Britain, half out of recognition of its economic decline and its impending vulnerability to balance of payments problems in a postwar imperialist world economy in which it would no longer be dominant, and half out of an imperialist arrogance born of over a century of supremacy, tried to leave its stamp on the negotiations in the form of a clause which would distribute the burden of adjustment equally between deficit and surplus countries. The US, in recognition of its future balance of payments surpluses, was having none of it. As is in the nature of things, the new won out over the old. There are many liberals who attempt to trace the eventual disintegration of the Bretton Woods system to this clause.

The IMF was created at a time

when most of the 'Third World' countries were still under the yoke of colonialism, which meant the imperialist countries had an overwhelming majority in the voting structures of both the IMF and its sister organisation, the World Bank. This has been perpetuated into the present period through the voting system, which allocates votes according to shareholding, leaving the US alone with around twenty percent of the votes.

The Soviet Union was represented at Bretton Woods, but refused to join an organisation designed to protect the international monetary system, the "Achilles heel of capitalism" (Lenin). Czechoslovakia and Poland did join, but resigned during the Cold War. As we know, Poland had to eat humble pie and apply to join the IMF in 1981 in the midst of foreign debt problems.

But voting shares were but a reflection of a deeper reality. It is not the ability of the imperialist countries to muster a majority of the leading bodies of international monetary bodies which determines the way these bodies operate, but it is the nature of the international monetary system itself which is primary. It is to the authors' credit that they recognise this.

When a country comes to the IMF with balance of payments problems, the IMF lends it money on condition that it is repaid. To ensure that the money is repaid, the IMF insists on certain policy adjustments. If these are not implemented, then the loan is frozen, and if the IMF freezes a loan, then commercial banks in turn will refuse to lend, not out of some kind of conspiracy of the rich, but out of simple economic sense. The problems of the international monetary system do not arise out of the 'conditionality' of IMF loans, but out of the very nature of capitalism as a mode of production.

In times of prosperity, the IMF could play its policing role in the world economy with relative ease, and with a degree of success. But as overproduction took over, and as the relative decline of US imperialism undermined the role of the dollar as an international currency, the role of the IMF became increasingly contradictory. The debt crisis, with its mounting developing country debts on one side, and the hypertrophy of fictitious capital representing claims to claims to capital on the other, puts an institution like the IMF in a dilemma.

It is torn between two options: to impose fiscal and monetary stringency to try to force debtors into repaying debts, or to provide extra credits to tide the debtor over the crisis. Its problem lies in the fact that



Ethiopian famine victims: under the yoke of imperialism

neither option offers a solution. The former tightens the noose around the debtor country, making default ever more likely thus exacerbating rather than easing the problem of an already stretched credit system. It is an option far better suited to dealing with the problems of the periodic balance of payments crisis faced by weaker imperialist countries in the fifties and sixties, the problems the IMF was designed to deal with in the first place. The latter option merely extends further the credit system. To attempt to solve the problem of large debts through extending those debts is doomed to failure, to the extent that the cause of the debts is not tackled.

But the cause of the debts is nothing other than the nature of production under capitalism as the production of capital, that is the fact that expansion of production gives rise to the overproduction of capital. The IMF can no more tackle that problem than it can extricate itself from the conditions of its inception. This second "option" in practice boils down to closing your eyes and hoping for the best.

The authors recognise this on one level, but at a deeper level fail to come to terms with its implications. They state correctly that the debt crisis is in part a result of the internal structure of the developing countries. They state also that one cannot simply put the blame on the policies of the imperialist countries and the IMF. But their answer is particularly weak: all these

governments and institutions in some sense "share" the blame; all have followed policies which have led to the debt crisis.

This is in contradiction to the authors' attempts to locate the origins of the crisis within the structure of the world economy itself, and exposes their eclectic methodology. To pose questions is not enough; one must break with bourgeois practicality. The International monetary system is not reformable, and its problems stem from the nature of the system it is based on and designed to perpetuate, namely capitalism.

The weaknesses of this book are shown most clearly in the attempt to come up with a 'solution' for the debt crisis. Despite their many insights, the authors revert to the myth that IMF short-sightedness, and the lack of pressure on balance of payments surplus countries to adjust, lie at the root of the problem. In their stead, they propose a "duty to adjust" for surplus countries, and for debtors adjustment schemes directed towards promoting development, that is long-term structural adjustment programmes which the IMF and World Bank have been trying with a noticeable lack of success since 1981. For all their valuable insights, the authors end up opting for the non-solution or propping up the system and promoting the falsehood that one can remove the symptoms without eradicating the disease.

Brian Curran

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SUBSCRIBE

WHEN IT WAS first launched we predicted the Communist Campaign Group would shatter at the first serious test. Well, the controversy over Brent Council's appointment of 180 'race advisers' and the suspension of head teacher Maureen McGoldrick, is hardly a serious test. Yet argument over these issues has thrown the CCG into a frenzy of mutual recrimination. Indeed it has been cleaved down the middle between those for or against the Labour controlled Brent Council.

The *Morning Star* has been deluged with letters. The anti-Brent Council CCGers have taken their stand around the banner of good industrial relations and trade unionism. Confronting them their pro-Brent Council adversaries are lined up on the ground of fighting racism.

As the *Morning Star* has tended to support McGoldrick it has come under fire. The most savage salvo, so far, has been from leading CCGer, Ivan Beavis. His letter slated the *Morning Star* for its refusal to give full support to Brent Council. According to Beavis the *Morning Star* suffers from a "patronising attitude" towards blacks and deals in "santimonious rhetoric" (*Morning Star*, November 19, 1986).

More mild mannered, but equally damning of the *Morning Star*'s coverage of the whole McGoldrick affair was Brent CCGer Jamie Ritchie.

He attacked the NUT's defence of McGoldrick as having "orchestrated some of the most scurrilous racism seen in the gutter press for a long time." (*Ibid*, November 6, 1986).

Against such criticism other CCGers echo the *Morning Star*'s rather tame criticisms of Brent Council. Tame against Brent Council maybe, but in the polemic against their fellow CCGers they have pulled no punches.

CCGers who support the NUT argue the well intentioned Brent Council has "bungled", is a bit "insensitive" and has drifted "into an anti-trade union position". But their pro-Brent Council comrades are accused of "breath-taking political ignorance", "confusion" and "mealy mouthed hypocrisy".

Reformism

On one level the divisions in the CCG lie with the contradiction between those who put old fashioned trade unionism as the first priority and those who put new radical anti-racism at the top of their agenda.

These questions are undoubtedly important factors. Certainly it is understandable that many CCGers consider it their duty to support Brent Council in the face of racist hysteria directed against it from the *Sun* and lurid smears by Norman Tebbit and Nicholas Ridley. It is equally understandable that others will consider it their duty to remain loyal to the principles of trade unionism. But it would be mistaken to leave it there. For at the heart of the divisions in the CCG is the reformism of all its tendencies.

We Leninists say the interests of the revolution must always be paramount. This goal, and only this goal, must determine all our actions. Why? Firstly, because we know full well that all sections and strata of the working class have a historical interest in the replacement of the bourgeois state. Secondly, we understand that institutionalised racism, sexism and chauvinism in Britain can only be overcome through the smashing of the

bourgeois state. Thirdly, we are convinced through study of the teachings of Marx and Lenin, that only with a programme of revolution can genuine working class unity be forged.

In contrast, reformists believe the working class can advance its long term interests through the medium of the capitalist state itself. While we think the capitalist state is the problem they see it as the solution. Thus for reformists, victims of racism, sexism and chauvinism should look to the state for protection, justice and advancement.

Can reformism advance the interests of the working class as a whole? No, quite the opposite. Reformism creates, fosters and reinforces sectionalism.

Instead of uniting with man, many women under the influence of reformism look to the state, which actually defends and engenders sexism. Liberation does not result but sectionalism does. Likewise we can see in Brent attempts to use the bourgeois state to combat racism not only generates sectionalism but inevitably creates divisions inside all groups and organisations committed to reformism. Thus in the CCG we have those who back the council and those who back the NUT.

McGoldrick is hardly a racist yet CCGers, who back the council and think racism can be overcome by consciousness changing and positive discrimination, are prepared to see her sacrificed for the supposed general good. Although she has a record of supporting the council's policy and is supported by her union, the vast majority of Brent teachers, the parents and the board of governors, CCGers who think the Labour Party is the main vehicle for social progress, have lined up against teachers when they dared defend one of their own against an employer. And despite the council making explicitly anti-working class remarks: in the words of the chair of the education committee "I don't care what teachers in Brent do", CCGers who spout "class politics", simply cannot see class politics when it explodes right under their noses.

Other CCGers confronted with the media hooah about the 'loony left' and pressurised by NUT activists have been pushed, albeit reluctantly, into criticism of Brent Council. The radical posturing of Brent Council's is they say misguided and the suspension of McGoldrick is put down to classic 'ultra-leftism'.

This approach has been adopted by the editor of the *Morning Star* and most CCG members of the NUT. What motivates him is not opposition to the state. No, for him the council is a bad employer. Of course, although other CCGers try to take an anti-state position by disapprovingly citing the NUT's use of the courts, ie the bourgeois state, this is nothing but opportunist hypocrisy given their defence of Brent Council. After all Brent Council is hardly a proletarian organ of dual power.

Over recent years the Labour/Tory balance on the council has been fairly even. Race has become a key political issue for both parties simply because around half the population in the borough is black.

Compared with Labour the Tories have a broadly similar approach to 'ethnic minorities'. There is a 1,000 strong Tory 'black section' in Brent and partially due to its cultivation of a pro-black veneer the Tories managed to gain control



Why support Brent council?

HOW TO FIGHT RACISM

of the council in 1983 with the defection from Labour of a black councillor previously championed by the left.

Labour gained a large majority in the May elections. This gave the left, which has a close relationship with Brent Trades Council CCGers such as Tom Durkin and Jamie Ritchie, the opportunity to make Merle Amory the council leader — the first black woman to occupy such a position.

Despite the council's change in political colour and the hype that greeted Amory there has been no fundamental change in policy. Although considered an 'ultra-leftist' by some Brent CCGers, when faced with government spending restrictions, Amory and the new Labour administration chose to attack the workforce and cut services just like the Tories before them.

Ultra-left image

Given Britain's institutionalised racism this was bound to affect in a particularly acute fashion the every blacks Amory claims to champion.

The cuts produced a crisis in all the borough's services not least education. Because of 'creative accounting' there were 12 schools without heads at the start of this term along with 170 unfilled teaching vacancies.

This disgraceful cost cutting meant 1,500 children, mainly black, only got part-time schooling. At McGoldrick's Sudbury School for instance, which has 22 teachers and caters for predominantly black pupils, there were four vacancies. Because of the council's unwillingness to cough up children at Sudbury had to be sent home for one week in three.

In the face of protests from parents the council was forced to go in for cosmetic changes. Temporary and unqualified teachers were recruited and instead of fighting the government the council attempted to shift the blame onto teachers, like McGoldrick, and their 'racism'.

This gave the council the image of being 'ultra-left', not only in the eyes of the bourgeois media and pro-*Morning Star* CCGers but believe it or not also the Socialist Workers Party (see *Socialist Worker* November 22, 1986). For SWP guru Tony Cliff the fight against racism is reduced to fighting "the tiny minority of active racists". Overthrowing the state and the capitalist system is ignored.

Anyway, to divert attention away from the cuts it was making, Brent's Labourites created, with the help of the Black Sections, *Socialist Action* and the *City Limits* left, a radical smoke screen by playing the anti-racist card. The Race Relations Unit was expanded, and along with generous grants to local black groups race awareness became official council ideology.

This has of course enhanced the career prospects of a few black upwardly mobile professionals, those who want to follow in the footsteps of Russell Profitt, the leading Labour Party Black Sections activist and now prospective MP for Lewisham. But although Profitt, as Brent's chief race relations officer, trumpets the council's achievements and claims it is "fundamentally committed to multi-cultural education and pioneering policies on race and gender", the vast majority of the black population in Brent have suffered more and more cuts and continued institutionalised racism.

Only 25% of the council's workforce is black and they are the

worst paid. The situation in the schools is even worse. Of the 2,300 teachers on the payroll only 12% are black, and most are on scale 1 — the lowest.

A council which uses anti-racism as a cover for its cost cutting and failure to challenge the government can only offer the mass of blacks austerity. And far from their empty anti-racist rhetoric easing racial tensions, the whole panoply of race relations officers, race awareness courses and race advisors can only encourage resentment in the minds of whites in the borough. With the help of the media, the false idea is created that they are being discriminated against in favour of blacks.

White workers become alienated from their black brothers and sisters and blacks get nothing except cuts and resentment. In other words Brent's 'anti-racism' actually strengthens racism and does nothing to alter for the better the material conditions of any significant section of the population.

That is why workers should have no truck with those wishing to defend Brent Council. We do not automatically support every action by trade unions. But socialism can only come from a working class united around a revolutionary programme, and not the bourgeois state. Because of this the working class is our subject, the state the enemy.

We therefore reject all state interference in our class. Racism can only be overcome by smashing the state. To facilitate this we will fight racism in the working class from within the working class, relying on working class interests, working class persuasion and working class sanctions.

Jack Conrad

SUPPLEMENT

**THE LENINIST
RALLY
UNDER THE BANNER
OF OCTOBER**



Some sixty people packed into The Leninist Rally (November 8 1986) to mark the 69th anniversary of the October Revolution and five years of the publication of The Leninist.

We reprint here, in full, the speeches made at this important gathering.

Anne, Unemployed Workers Charter

With official figures topping three million on the dole and unofficial figures estimating well over four million, unemployment promises to be the dominant issue at the next general election. The Labour Party leadership knows that Thatcher's record on unemployment is indefensible, and so they pin their chances for 1987 on exploiting the whole issue. The official labour movement, and the left in general, want simply to wait for the next Labour government. Those of us who understand capitalism know that reliance on a Parliamentary vote cannot end unemployment.

To us, the whole of working class history proves nothing is gained without persistent organisation and struggle. The difference in approach between the official labour movement and revolutionaries was sharply illustrated on the recent Jarrow 86 jamboree. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1936 Jarrow Crusade, and to show the unemployment situation is still the same in Jarrow today, Jarrow 86 was set up. Retracing the route of the original Jarrow crusade from Jarrow to London, some three hundred miles, but now joined by a high profile travelling theatre show, 59 unemployed workers completed the march.

Whilst we congratulate those marchers, and do not for one moment doubt their sincerity and their hatred of Thatcher, we ask them and all unemployed workers to question the sincerity of their Labourite organisers. I'd like to draw your attention to two problems of Jarrow '86 which I feel expose the whole cynical using of the unemployed as a PR exercise from Walworth Road.

The first problem is the model that Jarrow 86 was based on, the 1936 Jarrow Crusade, a begging bowl charity mongering march to highlight the plight of Jarrow after the closure of Palmers' shipyard. A well publicised, highly respectable, non-political march, it was implicitly anti-communist to the point that it even expelled a marcher simply for being a member of the Communist Party.

Strangely, the Labour Party and the TUC refused their support of that very safe march. Why? Because unemployment at that time was an issue closely connected with the militant and communist-led National Unemployed Workers' Movement. The NUWM organised up to a hundred thousand in its ranks, it organised factory raids to stop excessive overtime and fought side by side with workers in struggle. It organised six hunger marches between 1922 and 1936, each raising a specific demand for the unemployed.

It's interesting how the bourgeois press forgets these far bigger and far more significant, yet communist-led marches. Despite this anti-communism, the Jarrow Crusade of 1936 was greeted by a 50,000 strong demonstration mobilised by the Communist Party; a decidedly bigger demonstration than that which greeted our re-run Jarrow 86 last Sunday.

Which brings us to the second problem. Jarrow 86 was not about mobilising the unemployed, let alone organising the unemployed. All the talk of fighting unemployment was reduced to getting Kinnock into Number 10, all the struggles of the unemployed channelled into a pre-election stunt to promote the Labour Party as the Party of jobs. Jarrow 86 was designed for the press, the TV and for middle class sympathy. Jarrow 86 was serving electoral purposes and therefore demanded respectability. Two, maybe three thousand greeted our present day Jarrow marchers.

This abysmal turn-out had nothing to do with unemployment being a minor issue. No, the blame lies squarely with the Labourite organisers' deliberate lack of organisation.

There were no leaflets, no posters, no organised coaches, no publicity campaign in anything other than a tokenistic presence. The mobilisation was limited to turning out the oh-so-respectable, terribly-concerned, trade union leaders. And for the benefit of those unemployed workers and militants who just might slip along to that march, lessons in respectability were given from the platform, as a Labourite school mistress announced "Let's have no swilling of lager along the route!"

As if this patronising attitude wasn't bad enough, the final insult to the unemployed and their struggle came with a ban imposed on placards and on slogans.

Why ban slogans? Is it really about wanting a march of 'grim determination', as the organisers claimed? Of course it was not. The organisers hoped that by keeping the demonstration silent, Labourism would go unchallenged. The official movement understands only too well that mobilised, not only would the unemployed not be respectable, but would naturally gravitate towards revolutionary politics. Talking to youth, and notably black youth, they have no time for the niceties of Labourite politics and of public school style debates in the House of Commons. They look to South Africa for inspiration and example and talk of "the brothers in Cuba" coming to help us!

It was the unemployed that the UWC sought to mobilise on Sunday, leafleting dole offices, contacting unemployment centres, fly posting and generally advertising the demonstration. We were alone in raising the whole question of organising the unemployed.

While the TUC organisers wanted to keep the demonstration 'non-political' and silent, the UWC raised militant slogans and carried placards calling for the organisation of the unemployed the length and breadth of the march. And while the platform gave thanks to the police, the rally in Trafalgar Square found itself divided into respectable trade unionists wheeled in by the TUC and those who wanted to fight unemployment. This was clearly seen when Judas Willis delivered his 'next Labour government' sermon.

As soon as he lumbered up to the microphone, the UWC initiated chants of "scab!", not only in recognition of the TUC's treacherous role in the miner's Great Strike and the same treacherous role in the News International dispute at the moment, but also its collaboration with the notorious YTS slave labour scheme that Willis talks of supporting and indeed building up. While some objected to this heckling and showing of disrespect to the official labour movement, other significant sections joined with our chants, most notably unemployed workers and print workers.

Willis and his ilk tell us that unemployment can be overcome with the election of a Labour government, forgetting that under the last Labour government unemployment doubled and it was that same Labour government that introduced the Youth Opportunities Programme, forerunner to the YTS. But Kinnock isn't even promising an end to unemployment: when asked to give pledges around the unemployment issue, Kinnock cannot. He talks of creating one million new jobs in the first two years — *real jobs*, or just an expansion of the Community Programme? And what about the three million still left? Pathetic!

Capitalism produces unemployment. It is part of its very nature to have a reserve army of labour. Yet the Labour leadership does not even talk of ending capitalism, and that means, whether they like it or not, perpetuating unemployment. To end unemployment you need socialist planning, to get socialist planning you need a socialist state, to get a socialist state you need a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. That this is the case was proved brilliantly by the events following October 1917. That is why unemployed workers must be won to follow the example of the Bolsheviks and why the UWC looks to playing its part in the fight for the British revolution.

Supporters of the Organisation of the Iranian Peoples Fedaian

We have gathered here to celebrate the 69th anniversary of the great Socialist Revolution of October 1917, a historic event of the most profound importance to the working class and many peoples of the USSR and to the world. We are celebrating an event which is of great significance for the ongoing revolutionary process whereby the way was paved for the formation of other socialist revolutions and national liberation movements. At the end of the first declaration of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, Lenin said "the revolution of November 6th and 7th has opened the era of the social revolution... The labour movement, in the name of peace and socialism, shall win, and fulfil its destiny".

The present epoch is one of tremendous social changes and revolutionary transformations. The October Revolution gave

birth to socialist revolutions, national liberation struggles and clamped down on the imperialist colonial system. In this epoch socialism is no longer only an ideal, but a reality which has enriched and expanded over the past seven decades. The October Revolution initiated the construction of socialism and opened up a new era of human history whose principal content is the transition from capitalism to socialism.

"The present epoch, has provided all human societies, irrespective of their socio-economic level of development, with the international conditions and circumstances necessary for their transition to socialism. This transition is realised through the three component parts of the present world revolutionary process, i.e. the world socialist system, the working class revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and the national liberation movement." However, "this does not mean that every transition in the present epoch possesses the content of transition to socialism simply because it is a component part of the world revolutionary process". (OIPF Draft programme)

Nevertheless, the above mentioned international prerequisites, along with the action of the principal contradiction in the world, that is, the contradiction between the capitalist and socialist systems, does not automatically guarantee the realisation of this potential in the various countries of the capitalist world.

It is precisely the internal factors which play the principal and decisive role in the transition to socialism in a given country. "The transition to socialism is a conscious, goal-oriented process; it can not happen automatically, solely because of the action of objective factors. In the national arena, this transition requires the working class, led by its Marxist-Leninist revolutionary vanguard, to assume the leadership of the state and society." (*Ibid*) Citing favourable international factors such as the change in the balance of forces in favour of the forces of the world revolution and against imperialism, cannot provide the working class with the necessary leadership for the conclusive and final victory of the anti-imperialist democratic revolution with a socialist orientation. In fact, today more than ever, the leadership of the working class in a social revolution is the prime condition for its decisive victory.

However, without international solidarity such a victory cannot be achieved. Liberation from the yoke of capital is, above all, a social and global task. However, this social and international task is carried out by the working class which, like any other class, is comprised of national contingents. It goes without saying that the primary arena for the working class of any given country, is to struggle for socialism in its own country. Nevertheless, this task is only completed through active solidarity with the struggles of the workers of other countries and their revolutionary vanguards.

In fact the victory of the October Revolution was due to the correct vision and perception of national and international questions and their interconnections. Prior to the 1917 revolution, while Lenin was working towards preparing the working class to seize power in Russia, he was at the same time stressing the necessity of founding a new international as a revolutionary centre which later became the Third International. His well known formulation on this issue, which precisely expresses this link and — even today — serves as a guide for world revolutionaries, is as follows.

"There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is, working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) this struggle, this and only this line, in every country without exception".

Proletarian internationalism has a dynamic character. Its inception goes back to the first stages of formation of mass workers' organisations which was expressed in the slogan of "workers of the world unite". Today it provides the basis for unity of the three main revolutionary forces of the world, in struggle for peace, independence, democracy and socialism.

Comrades, as we celebrate the October Revolution, we are also celebrating socialist achievements of the Soviet people led by the CPSU. The past 69 years have witnessed profound transformations in all aspects of life. Socialist relations have replaced capitalist, feudalist and patriarchal relations. It has uprooted extreme poverty, disease and illiteracy and brought about social justice with a high level of material and spiritual

development.

A new social order, i.e. voluntary unity of nations, has replaced the old relations based on national oppression. Relying on their tremendous achievements to date, and as determined in the resolutions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Soviet people are celebrating the 69th anniversary of the October Revolution by embarking upon a strategy of accelerating socio-economic development, further democratisation of society and promotion of the people's socialist self-government. The leadership of the CPSU, while commending the achievements of the party and the country as a whole, took its duty to "tell the party and people honestly and frankly about the deficiencies in political and practical activities, the unfavourable tendencies in the economy and the social and moral sphere, and about the reasons for them". This strategy is based on a profound analysis of the whole experience of socialist reconstruction in the Soviet Union and in other countries, especially over the past 25 years.

In this experience there are valuable lessons of immense importance not only for the communist of socialist countries which are faced with the questions of acceleration of economic development and promotion of socialist democracy, but also for the communists of capitalist countries. The significance of these lessons is not merely related to socialist reconstruction and all that it entails.

The Soviet experience opens up some aspects of struggle for socialism and democracy the world over. The essence of these lessons is in combating the bureaucratic tendency in its outlook towards socialism and reaffirming the organic relation between democracy and socialism. In order to clarify this issue, let us comparatively consider it in relation to the situation in dependent countries such as Iran:

If the bureaucratic tendency in socialist societies intends to replace the dynamic and active role of the masses in the construction of a new society with the role of the state in leading economic development, for this tendency in dependent capitalist countries, the growth and dominance of the state sector is an indication of socialist orientation and therefore progressive.

In other words, socialism is identified with state interference in the economy, and the public sector is wholly or partly synonymous with the 'popular economy'. In the Iranian communist movement, we have witnessed political currents that have considered the public sector of the Shah's regime as 'people's aspirations' and also post-1979 expansion in public and cooperative sectors as the foundations for the 'non-capitalist way of development'.

If the bureaucratic tendency in socialist countries wishes to weaken the bonds between the state bureaucracy and the masses of the people and substitute the functions of the state apparatus for the creative and active role of the masses; in dependent countries, this tendency is apparent in the bureaucratic perfection of class struggle, undermining mass mobilisation as the most determining force for social upheavals and overestimating the potential of the forces at the top.

If the bureaucratic tendency in socialist countries inclines to undermine the democratic nature of the state organs and political system, and intends to direct the active and free participation of people in society's political life into bureaucratic channels, this tendency in dependent countries results in undermining democracy and political freedoms. In the recent experience of Iran, we have witnessed how this deviation has implied that democratic rights can be achieved and maintained without democracy and political freedoms and that "democratic rights are prior to democracy and political freedoms."

If the bureaucratic tendency in socialist countries desires to underestimate the independent and popular nature of social organisations such as trade unions, women's and youth organisations ... and to direct the reliance of these organisations to bureaucratic channels rather than to the masses under their coverage, in dependent countries, this tendency has a patronage perception of the role of popular organisations and even tends to justify the state's pressure and suppression of these organisations.

If the bureaucratic tendency in socialist countries creates a situation whereby the social needs of the people are not met as much as objectively possible; or groups of people put their interests above society's interests and tend wholly or partly to live at society's expense, this tendency in dependent countries is manifested

in its acceptance of reforms within capitalist structure rather than revolutionary struggles for the masses' basic demands.

Finally, if the bureaucratic tendency in socialist countries wants to construct socialism with the inactive participation of the masses instead of providing opportunities for their innovative and creative participation, this can in its continuation and persistence result in a crisis situation, such as a rift between the party and the socialist state on the one hand, and a section of the workers and masses on the other, which can in turn undermine the stability of their socialist system itself. This tendency in dependent countries disarms the struggle itself for socialism. It replaces the popular revolutionary struggle for democracy and socialism with a reconciliatory and bureaucratic understanding of class struggle.

Comrades, as revealed in the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the transformation of different countries to socialism "was neither smooth nor simple. It was exceedingly difficult to raise the backward or ruined economy, to teach millions of people to read and write, to provide them with a roof over their heads, with food and free medical aid. The very novelty of the social tasks, the ceaseless military, economic, political and psychological pressure of imperialism, the need for tremendous efforts to ensure defence — all this could not fail to influence the course of events, their character, and the rate at which the socio-economic programmes and transformations were carried into effect".

In this transformation, "nowhere were mistakes in politics, and various subjectivist deviations, avoided". However, despite the difficulties and the existing subjective and objective problems, the communist movement, and socialism, has again according to the Political Report of the CPSU's 27th Congress "demonstrated its ability to resolve social problems on a fundamentally different basis than before, namely a collectivist one, has brought the countries to higher levels of development, and has given the working people a decent and secure life".

In this path, the more spirit of the search for truth is promoted among the communist and labour movement, the greater the achievements will be. Furthermore, in this hard struggle for socialism, which is our aim and our destiny, let us remember the words of Bertolt Brecht.

PRAISE OF COMMUNISM

It's sensible,
Anyone can understand it.
It's easy.
You're not an exploiter,
So you can grasp it.
It's a good thing for you,
Find out more about it.
The stupid call it stupid
And the squalid call it squalid.
It is against squalor and against stupidity.
The exploiters call it a crime
But we know:
It is the end of crime.
It is not madness,
But the end of madness.
It is not the riddle
But the solution.
It is the simplest thing,
So hard to achieve.

Mike Banda

I was there at the beginning, in the period of the 'forties and I was there at the end, and I do mean *the end*. Because what we saw at the end of 1985 wasn't just the explosion of the WRP, it was a terminal crisis, it was finished completely. And no attempt by anybody anywhere in the world can reconstitute that weird and wonderful thing that we used to call 'the International Committee of the Fourth International'.

When I went to Sri Lanka last year, people were assured that I had abandoned politics, that I was joining the Buddhist clergy or that I was in fact joining the Lanka Sama Samaj Party, a Party that was the biggest Trotskyist movement after the war and the most viable, with the most able and distinguished Trotskyists, so distinguished that they became ministers of finance, ministers of public security and presided over the execution of the JVP rebels by the hundreds in 1971. I did none of these things: the Buddhist clergy would not have had me even if I had tried to join them, and the LSSP I would never join, even if I got a lifetime pass to the English National Opera with it.

I went to Sri Lanka because I thought the time had come to have a complete review of the entire gamut of Trotskyism, from the

beginning to the end. I assumed wrongly at the time that Trotsky had sown dragons' teeth and reaped fleas. I now think the reason that he reaped fleas was because he *sowed* fleas and that there is a direct causative connection between the present plight and complete dead-end of Trotskyist politics all over the world, the circumstances of the formation of the Fourth International in 1938 and in fact the formation of the International Left Opposition in the early thirties. I have begun the documentation of this and I hope to have the first section out by the end of this week.

I think that it is absolutely vital to put this whole historical record straight because there were thousands of people, youth and adults, workers and peasants who were trapped in the Trotskyist movement. They assumed, wrongly of course, that this was authentic Leninism. They were quite correctly put off by the policies of the Communist International, such as Popular Frontism. Certainly I was alienated from the world communist movement in the 1940s by its class-collaborationist policies and the abandonment of class struggle perspectives in the period of the Second World War and the complete support for the British military administration. So, on that grounds, I joined the Trotskyist movement.

It became clear, however, with the whole struggle of the world's working class, that what we had in fact opted for was a kind of surrogate centrist movement. One of the curious things about the Workers' Revolutionary Party was that we hardly ever celebrated the October Revolution! We would commemorate the death of Trotsky unflinchingly. The Trotsky question became so paramount in our movement that it became a cult: the Communist Party of the Soviet Union dealt with its own cult of the personality in 1956, the Trotskyist movement is yet to come to terms with the cult of Leon Trotsky. It became so bad that we spent over £4,000 to acquire the death mask of Trotsky and it was always displayed on the platform of every major rally, where the devotees of this church would come and pay their obeisance to it.

The Workers Revolutionary Party in Clapham, of course, dispensed with the death mask. There is good reason for that: they have replaced the death mask with Messrs William Hunter, Geoff Pilling, Dr Slaughter and other intellectual 'gurus'. Nothing basically has changed! It is not an accident that it has taken this form, because to me the whole question of the Soviet Union is *the* question, and what blew up the WRP was not the miners' strike, wasn't even the issue of revolutionary morality and the practices of G Healy, however abominable they were, or South Africa or any question like that. At the centre of it all were contradictions lodged in the programmatic and theoretical foundations of the Fourth International itself. And the supporters of the WRP present can write what I'm saying out in letters ten feet high as far as I'm concerned.

The question of the Soviet Union is, in fact, the touchstone of the working class all over the world. Russia of 1917 stands to us in the same way that the French Revolution did to the revolutionary democrats in Europe during the 19th Century. Any confusion, any indecision, any distortion of the real, historical and lawful nature of that whole development that took place from 1917 onwards, must sooner or later affect what you do in your own particular country.

I had a discussion this afternoon with a friend from another part of the world. He asked me "What are you doing now?" I explained, but he insisted "You must have some practice as well as theory."

So I asked: "What is your practice?" And he replied: "We are preparing for the armed struggle." Then I put this to him:

"You have to ask yourself this question. Sooner or later at the end of the day, if you are going to involve yourself in an armed struggle, you're going to come up against the question and the actuality of the Soviet Union, the main source of weaponry today for every national liberation movement, whether it is in the Far East, or in the toe of Latin America or in South Africa. And if you are confused on these questions, then what are you going to do even after you take power in the country, because even then you have to define your position in the world in relation to the Soviet Union?"

Those, of course, who came to the conclusion that it was some kind of imperialist state made themselves look very silly in the eyes of the working class, certainly during the Second World War, and they have been made to look very silly again after Rejkavik and Vienna. In fact, the Trotskyist movement has

created willy-nilly the conditions which have created this confusion, which is more deliberate than accidental, and which does in fact facilitate the preparations of world imperialism for war against the Soviet Union.

Now I'm not saying that the suppression of the opposition or the Moscow Trials or any of these things were correct or justifiable. No. But what I do say is that despite those trials, despite the enormous sufferings of the Soviet people — and no nation suffered as much as the Russians — they built the socialist property relations, they enormously augmented the productive forces of their country to the point where today, it does in fact stand as the foremost industrial power in some sectors. In terms of the productivity of labour, they lag behind of course, but they do face up to it frankly as previous speakers have mentioned. A whole new area has been opened up within the Soviet Union, particularly since the coming to power of Gorbachev.

We in the Trotskyist movement, however, subscribed to this almost fatalist, dogmatic and completely sceptical theory that the Soviet government was the organ of the world bourgeoisie. And we wrote it into our foundation document, we had to, it was inevitable, because despite all the evidence to the contrary, particularly after 1928 when Stalin embarked on a collectivisation and industrialisation programme, Trotsky could never forgive Stalin for having usurped his programme and implemented it! So much so, that no matter how much he said on the one hand that the Soviet Union was a workers' state and that this was a deformed dictatorship of the working class, in the same breath he would say that it was a restorationist group in the Kremlin and that it had to be overthrown.

So, no matter how much we would disagree with our so-called enemies on the right — the state capitalists, the bureaucratic collectivists, the SWP and all these people — in practice, we agreed with them that our main enemy was the Soviet government and it had to be overthrown. And this is what we said in fact in our political programme:

"The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming more and more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism." (Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Programme*, New Park, London, 1975, pp 47-48).

Now I think we are entitled to ask, after 50 years, what actually happened? Did either of these prognoses materialise in the Soviet Union? In what form? Where is the evidence? Marxism is based on a scientific elaboration of facts, analysis of facts and a criticism of facts. But to date there has been not a single fact at all, and to compound the confusion *The Transitional Programme* went on to say that in fact, within the bureaucracy, there were not only restorationist elements, but also *fascist* elements and that the fascist elements were gaining ground. That was written in 1938, eight years after the first collectivisation and the *smashing* of any potential for the restoration of capitalism within the Soviet Union. Here is what we said:

"The fascist, counterrevolutionary elements, growing uninterruptedly, express with even greater consistency the interests of world imperialism. These candidates for the role of compradors consider, not without reason, that the new ruling layer can ensure their positions of privilege only through rejection of nationalisation, collectivisation and monopoly of foreign trade in the name of the assimilation of 'Western civilisation', ie capitalism." (Leon Trotsky, *Ibid*, p48).

And further:

"The extermination of the generation of old Bolsheviks and of the revolutionary representatives of the middle and young generations has acted to disrupt the political equilibrium still more in favour of the right bourgeois wing of the bureaucracy and of its allies. From them, from the right, we can expect ever more determined attempts in the next period to revise the socialist character of the USSR and bring it closer in pattern to western civilisation in its fascist form."

I don't want to read any further, it embarrasses me, as a matter of fact. I've got here another book called *The Revolution Betrayed*. I don't say you shouldn't read it; by all means read it. But if it comes to be classified, it should be put in a special section of a political library belonging to such writers as Kropotkin, Proudhon and Bakunin and other utopian types of socialists, because that in fact is where

it belongs.

There was even an element of charlatany about the whole way that this central question was approached by Trotsky. There was an enormous element of intellectual arrogance, almost of peevishness about the fact that they were defeated. What happened to the Left Opposition is what happened to a certain extent to the Leveller movement after it was smashed by Cromwell. It became the basis for the pacifist movement, the Quakers, moral force and every political movement which was opposed to the idea that the state form could be overthrown. And that went on right up until the French Revolution, which in turn gave a great impetus to the revolutionary democratic movement.

I think that has been the fate of the Trotskyist movement and why in 60 years we have not built a movement anywhere in the world which you could really call a viable movement. We have never led a revolution or even in fact betrayed one! We never even got to first base. And that was precisely because of the confusion that arose after 1923 in relation to the Soviet Revolution and its successive stages of development. In fact, we mistook the trees for the wood: the suppression of forms of political and Soviet democracy for the material foundations of the Soviet Union itself. In fact, the suppression of Soviet democracy presupposed the actual development of productive forces. Isn't that what happened in Britain?

The bourgeoisie did not give the people the vote after the civil war for two centuries. Cromwell's people argued, correctly from their standpoint, from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, that they weren't going to give democracy in that form because it would ruin the chances of the development of capitalist property forms, and could even conceivably lead in Britain to this thing that we have in France, the peasantry. And the great thing about the Cromwellian Revolution was that it put an end to any idea of a peasantry arising in this country and gave us the basis for the movement we have today, an enormously powerful working class movement in Britain.

However, there is a similarity between Britain and Russia: Britain was the first country to pioneer the capitalist revolution, Russia was the first country to pioneer the socialist revolution. In Britain, they ended the peasantry and made a prodigious development of industry; in Russia a very similar process took place. They smashed and atomised the peasantry. Read the reports of Gorbachev — the peasantry is now a small percentage of the population in the Soviet Union. The vast mass of the Soviet people today live in towns; 800 new towns and two thousand new townships were created in the period of the first five year plan. Within the first two five year plans the working class almost doubled.

And if we haven't had a political revolution in the Soviet Union, it is precisely because of that reason. Unlike France, where there were political revolutions because of the existence of the peasantry, in Britain, the very power of this working class was so great that it could force through reforms *without* the political revolution. And that is what we have seen in Russia. I suggest that Trotsky's method was not a Marxist method at all. It was based fundamentally on a whole series of analogies, all of which were limping on both legs. The task of Marxists, as Lenin pointed out, is not to resort to analogies and examples, but to determine the thing out of itself. That is what dialectics is all about.

That is what the Russian revolution means to me. It recalls to me Lenin, Lenin's struggle for the Bolshevik Party, Lenin's struggle for the development of dialectical materialism, of logic, of dialectics, of the theory of knowledge and the coincidence of the historical and the logical whose finest expression was the Russian Revolution. Without Lenin, and without that struggle, there would have been no Russian Revolution. I'm not saying that Trotsky did not play a role in that Revolution, but I think that that role has been vastly exaggerated at the expense of Lenin himself.

So the time has now come to say that the best way that we can commemorate the October Revolution is to prepare to make a new one. And the best way to do that is to turn again to these sources that the comrades previously have mentioned in relation to the developments with the Soviet Union and to take away these blinkers, these halters that have held us back, in my case for almost 40 years, and to look at these questions anew from the standpoint of revolutionary critical activity, the development of theory and the abolition of dogma.

Thank you, comrades.

John Chamberlain

It is said that the British bourgeoisie is one of the most cultured ruling classes in the world. Whether that is true or not, one thing that we can definitely say about it is that it is not necessarily the best informed.

It was interesting for us to read in a glossy and expensive journal for the consumption of big business the description of *The Leninist* as a "hardline ultra-Stalinist publication".

As you might have gathered from reading our publication, we are certainly "hardline" but as to "ultra-Stalinist", that's a different kettle of fish altogether!

But it must be said that the British bourgeoisie were little better informed about the Bolsheviks in 1917. I'll read you a couple of quotes just to illustrate the quality of information that the bourgeois press was giving out about the Russian Revolution, as it was in the process of unfolding.

The *Daily Mail*, a paper not known for its objectivity, told its readers that "armed pacifists" had seized control of Petrograd and if you would like to tell me what an "armed pacifist" is I'd be very interested to hear.

The *Manchester Guardian* described the Bolshevik Revolution as a "Maximalist coup"; for students of the Russian Revolution, the Maximalists were a very small splinter group off the Socialist Revolutionaries and certainly were not in the forefront of the uprising in October 1917.

The *Morning Post*, a long forgotten bourgeois paper now, described the revolution as being "made in Germany" and it was hardly unique in that description. Finally, the *Times* informed its readers that Lenin was "losing control".

Now okay, in the midst of the revolutionary struggle it might seem to the bourgeoisie that Lenin was losing control, but I suspect that that was very much more a question of hope on the part of *The Times* rather than solid information, because a few months later, in January 1918, the *Daily Telegraph* announced to its readers that "no sane man would give the Bolshevik government as much as a month to live".

So here we are today 69 years later celebrating that victorious revolutionary uprising in Petrograd. We celebrate that revolution not simply because it was heroic, but also because it represented the first decisive step of mankind on the road from capitalism towards communism. The Russian Revolution marked a decisive break in previous struggles and opened up a new epoch for humanity. So we do not look on the Russian Revolution as just being a national revolution, it was very, very much an international revolution. Indeed, it reflected in its essence the contradictions of the capitalist world as a whole.

When we celebrate the October Revolution, we don't just celebrate its victory in 1917, we also celebrate the fact that it has survived against tremendous odds for 69 years. Not just against capitalist encirclement and counter-revolutionary invasion but against the attacks and slanders of the so-called leaders of the working class.

It wasn't only the bourgeoisie and the imperialists that attacked the Russian Revolution in 1917, that have organised against the revolution for 69 years, it was also leaders of our working class movement.

I won't go into the whole gamut of them, but I will provide you with a few quotes. Ramsey MacDonald, the forefather of all treacherous Labourite prime ministers, the man who gained a certain reputation in World War I as being a bit of a leftist, the man who wouldn't sit in a war cabinet what did this social pacifist say about the Russian Revolution? He described Lenin's Bolshevik Party as "thoughtless anarchists" and condemned the whole affair. Likewise, Philip Snowden, his deputy and a man who *did* sit in a war cabinet described the whole thing as "tragic indeed". Of course, it was tragic for the bourgeoisie and its Labourite servant, but hardly tragic for the working class. And, if you look at the British trade union movement, much of its leadership was little different. One Thomas of the NUR, described the "Bolshevik tyranny" as "worse than the Tzar".

As to British Marxism, what was its position? For the doctrinaire, pseudo-Marxists, those who understood nothing about the essence of Marxist revolutionary theory, who didn't have the first inkling about dialectics, they too actually stood out against the Bolshevik revolution. Mr Hyndman, once the leading 'Marxist' in Britain, described the Bolsheviks as "nothing better than a bunch of butchers" in comparison with the Tzarist government ... So

when we look back at the last 69 years, we don't just look at the Soviet Union surviving against the attacks of the imperialist bourgeoisie, we also look at the Soviet Union having to survive against those leaders of the working class.

What was most tragic and most criminal was the actions of misleaders of the working class movement in Germany. When Lenin made his revolution, there was no doubt in his mind that the Bolshevik Revolution would be very quickly followed by other revolutions in Europe, most importantly by the German Revolution. As we know however, the German Revolution was not just crushed by the German bourgeoisie alone, it was crushed by the treachery of social democracy, and at their feet must be placed the isolation of the Russian Revolution for the subsequent period. At their feet must be placed the responsibility for the fact that in isolation, the Russian Revolution went through the most horrendous distortions, suffered the most awful calamities.

Have no doubts that the Soviet Union suffered a great deal because of its isolation. Many setbacks in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and the 1930s were, of course, unavoidable. Lenin himself was quite well aware, even in 1918, that the communist measures that the Bolshevik Party was introducing on paper were not able to be actually put into practice given the dire poverty that the socialist regime was being built on. In other words, what often was the case was that what they were actually building was formal socialism, with formal socialist democracy. This can be best illustrated with the soviets.

The soviets were a product of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. They went from revolutionary organs of struggle before October 1917 to being revolutionary organs of power. They were the very basis of the Bolshevik revolution and the socialist system that Lenin envisaged Russia would build. But as Lenin himself pointed out, due to the isolation of the Russian Revolution, due to the backwardness of the social conditions they were operating in, those soviets became increasingly formal, shell-like and rubber-stamp bodies.

But let us be frank. That doesn't mean that all the problems that the Soviet Union experienced from 1917 onwards and most particularly in the 1920s and the 1930s, were unavoidable. In particular what was avoidable was the retreat in terms of ideology that was enacted. Far from honestly justifying retreats as Lenin had justified the NEP, it increasingly became the case that every retreat was represented as an advance, or if not an advance then certainly as something that was fully in conformity with the development of socialism.

That was obviously the case with Stalin when he spoke about this whole question of communism in one country. He went through quite a few contorted somersaults to arrive at Lenin, Marx and Engels inventing that particular concept. Those type of ideological retreats were in our view quite avoidable and have cost our movement dear.

If you look at the parlous state of our movement in Britain today, and Eurocommunism itself, it must be said that, in part, they are the product of some of Stalin's ideological doctoring of Marxism. If you were to tell a Eurocommunist that, however, they would vehemently disagree. But we can show through the study of the history of our movement that if the mother of Eurocommunism is bourgeois society, its father was Joseph Stalin, not Santiago Carrillo, or Dimitrov or even poor old Gramsci, that much maligned and much misused imprisoned Italian revolutionary.

The right evolution of Eurocommunism isn't the 'fault' of the USSR, but the CPSU under Stalin planted seeds of rightism in our world movement. This was not because of evil intent but the result of the Soviet Union trying to defend itself in the wrong way. When the USSR was surrounded by hostile imperialist powers, it was quite correct for it to operate the tactic of peaceful coexistence. That was 100% correct. But tactics should be by their very nature flexible, and the tactics of communists should always be subordinated to the overall struggle for world revolution. Unfortunately, that is something that the Soviet comrades increasingly have reduced to a formality or have 'forgotten' altogether.

As a result, we see the situation today where at the 27th Party Congress, comrade Gorbachev hardly mentioned the idea of world revolution. He dealt with the problems of the Soviet Union internally and made many important and perfectly correct suggestions about overcoming those difficulties. However he only posed pacifistic tasks for our world movement.

Where Lenin's programme posed completing what the Bolsheviks had begun in October 1917 — struggling for revolution in your own country as your first duty towards the world revolution and subordinating your particular national revolution to the interests of that world revolution — what comrade Gorbachev posited in his report was that the prime concern of communists in the world today was the struggle for peace. And what he meant by the struggle for peace wasn't the sort that the Bolsheviks carried out in 1917, the turning of imperialist war into civil war, the destruction of the imperialist war drive by actually fighting to destroy imperialism.

What he means by the struggle for peace is in essence the struggle to preserve the status quo. That is not a task one communist organisation should pose to another.

There can be no doubt about the tremendous progress that the USSR has made economically, culturally and politically. We celebrate that today and pay tribute to those achievements. But comrades, just imagine what the situation would have been today if the communist movement in Germany in 1918 had been strong enough, equipped with the correct ideology and early enough in forging a Bolshevik-type Party that could have succeeded in making revolution. And just imagine what progress could be made today, if Soviet socialism were to become combined with the most productive and technologically advanced countries, through us in the West making revolution.

So when we celebrate the Soviet Union's achievements we also bear in mind what could have been and what tasks the future demands of us. When we in Western Europe are becoming used to microtechnology, biotechnology and the latest wonders of science, it boggles the mind to realise that these wonders that humanity is producing are, under capitalism, being used with the aim of mass destruction and murder, and exist side by side with starvation, economic stagnation and tens of millions languishing unemployed.

Capitalism may still have a certain technical dynamism but it is now thoroughly reactionary. Far from it being the system of technological progress as it likes to imagine, it is quite the opposite, it actually holds back technological progress, it holds back, distorts and endangers the progress of the world.

The tasks of the world revolution are becoming ever more pressing, not only in relation to the Soviet Union's continued problems, and comrades do not imagine that the USSR has overcome all its problems, but also because world imperialism is increasingly on the warpath and is leading humanity to the abyss of a new inter-imperialist crisis. What that means is that, just as it attempted to do in World Wars I and II, imperialism will attempt to solve its difficulties by a war of redivision. And of course, the prime target of that drive towards redivisionist war today is the socialist world and above all the Soviet Union.

Only on the basis of having a dynamic economy can the USSR stave off the US-led anti-Soviet war drive. That is why we support every measure that the Soviet Union takes to strengthen its economy. But this can only be a holding operation. Defence of the Soviet Union — the greatest gain of the world's working class — is bound up with extending the world revolution.

Of course having revolutions in Japan, Britain, France, Federal Germany and above all the United States would more or less complete the world revolution. But just as capitalism manifests extreme unevenness, so does the world revolution. The fact that Russia, a very backward capitalist country where the overwhelming majority of the population were peasants, was able to play the vanguard of the world revolution 1917 is an example of that. Today, far from us seeing revolutionary situations in advanced Western countries, what we see are the medium developed capitalist countries expressing the contradictions of world imperialism in their most acute form. What that produces, as sure as night follows day, are revolutionary situations.

If you look around the world in the last ten years or so, where do you look to see the lessons that contain within them our own future in Japan, Britain, Federal Germany and the US? We look to Iran, Chile, Turkey, Greece, Portugal. And not only for positive lessons, but also for negative lessons.

Some of the comrades here tonight have learned in a very bitter and sharp way the problems of having ideological illusions. In Britain, its easy for us to have those type of illusions. People can sit in pubs after meetings

and discuss ideological illusions, debate them until the cows come home. But with internationalism we have the advantage of the acid test of practice with which to test ideas and from which to draw lessons. We around *The Leninist* have in particular learnt from what happened in Turkey.

Turkey had a revolutionary situation throughout the 1970s: a tremendously drawn-out revolutionary situation. That period was testing of all revolutionary pretensions, all theories. Everything that was false, everything that was shallow was thoroughly exposed.

Those who thought you could simply make a revolution in a country like Turkey by idealistically copying the example of China or Cuba were proved to be sadly and tragically mistaken. In the same way, those who thought that all that was needed was to be loyal to the Soviet Union and simply follow every diplomatic twist and turn of the Soviet state found themselves not only left on the sidelines, but actually playing a negative role as the revolutionary situation unfolded. Worse than that, those who thought that once you had a social democrat in power all you needed to do was act as a pressure group on them, were proved to be on the side of counterrevolution.

For it wasn't some military regime that started to introduce fascist measures in Turkey, but an equivalent of a Labour government. It started to introduce martial law against the Kurdish people and against working class cities that were rising up against oppression and the intolerable pressures on living standards that the capitalist crisis was producing.

So with the example of the treacherous role of social democracy against the unemployed in Britain fresh in our minds, its counterrevolutionary acts from Germany 1918 to Turkey 1980, we look to October 1917 for a few answers.

When we remember October 1917, we avoid this rather facile mistake that others make of imagining that Lenin and the Bolsheviks overthrew the Tzar. The Bolsheviks in fact overthrew a government that consisted of people who called themselves revolutionaries, and even revolutionary Marxists. So when we think about the future revolution in Britain, we don't just think of overthrowing Margaret Thatcher, or some equally rightwing regime, we also have in mind the making of revolution against one of capitalism's potential last resorts, a British Kerensky like Derek Hutton, Tony Cliff or some other Trotskyite friend of Labourism.

It seems to many that we in Britain have the luxury of seemingly endless debate. But the fact is the contradictions in British capitalism are maturing slowly but surely to the point where it will no longer be able to give the working class the benefits of the crumbs from the imperialist table. When that point comes and the British working class says 'enough is enough, we want revolutionary change, not the next Labour government', the working class will start its real education in practice, as one set of pseudo-socialists is replaced by another set of pseudo-revolutionaries, until the point comes when the Party can win the majority of the working classes to carry out the sort of revolution that the Bolsheviks led in 1917.

Let us remember, the success of the Russian Revolution didn't just lie in the genius of Lenin as an individual. It lay in the ability of the Bolsheviks under Lenin to manoeuvre, to adapt, to change, to learn from the conditions they were operating in and defeat all forms of opportunism. The conditions that the Bolsheviks were operating in facilitated this and at the same time demanded ingenuity of the revolutionary vanguard. Russian conditions found the official, centrist Marxism of the Second International wanting. Indeed Lenin brilliantly in practice and theory broke with the 'orthodox' Marxism of the Kautskyite school.

With this in mind we must say that those who think that they are going to make revolution in Britain or anywhere else by simply following the official world communist movement orthodoxy that goes under the name of 'Marxism Leninism' today are as mistaken as the Mensheviks were. 'Official', 'mainstream' orthodoxy has constantly led to disaster, as our Iranian and Turkish comrades will testify. What this teaches us is that the Soviet, Chinese, Albanian — no Party can think for us. And speaking for *The Leninist*, that means we communists must learn from our Turkish, Iranian, Chilean or Portuguese comrades but think on our own feet. Looking at their practice and creatively putting the most advanced lessons into practice in our conditions. This is the way forward in the struggle to complete the world revolution begun so brilliantly in October 1917.